

# PART TWO

## Two-Voice Counterpoint

### Chapter 1

#### The First Species: Note Against Note

##### General Aspects

###### §1. *The concept of counterpoint*

A second voice placed above or below the cantus firmus is called the *counterpoint*.

Such a [resulting] two-voice structure naturally presents situations whose treatment offers a desirable testing-ground for refinement of the student's musical sense.

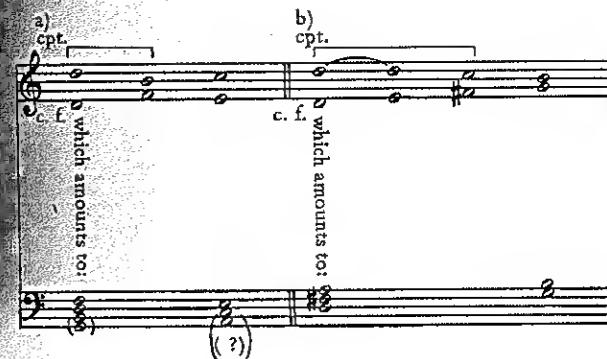
###### §2. *The permitted intervals*

In this species only consonances may be used.

This restriction has to do exclusively with the nature of the situation presented by the first species. Because of the absence of scale degrees (*Harmony*, §84f.) and of any richer contrapuntal movement, the first species lacks the power to clarify the true sense of dissonances.

The use of dissonances, on the contrary, would necessarily lead to the establishment of larger harmonic units, as the following examples illustrate:

Example 151



At a the ear would have to collect the interval succession 8—4 into a sum comprising B—D—F, and at b, the succession 8—7—5 into a sum comprising D—F#—(A)—C with a passing tone E in the cantus firmus; obviously the equilibrium of all vertical combinations would thereby suffer considerably. Specifically, in the first case two, and in the second case as many as three, harmonic events would be dominated entirely by a single tone: B at a and D at b; only with reference to these tones could the motion of the voices be consistently generated and securely understood.

It comes down to this: the consonant interval speaks for itself; it rests in its euphony, signifying by itself both origin and end. This is not true of the dissonance, whose presence always requires further justification; far from resting at peace in itself, the dissonance instead points urgently beyond itself; it can be understood only in relation to—that is, by means of and in terms of—a consonant entity, from which it follows that the consonant entity alone signifies origin and end for the dissonance.

In this sense, consonance manifests an absolute character, dissonance, on the contrary, a merely relative and derivative one: *in the beginning is consonance!* The consonance is primary, the dissonance secondary!

This implies, however, that the *dissonance* must first be justified (specifically, through a consonance), while the consonance, sustained by its euphonious character and therefore less dependent, needs no justification beyond itself. But how—and this is the question for the moment—could we adduce proof of the necessity of a dissonance in a contrapuntal exercise, which lacks the control and motivation of scale degrees? [Lacking any such proof,] we must, in exercises of the first type to be considered, avoid the dissonance as insupportable, and base all vertical sonorities only on consonance, which, to the extent that grounds for the justification of dissonance are absent, always represents in itself the first principle, the first logical foundation of simultaneity.

We shall see later how, above an explicitly sustained tone of the *cantus firmus* (and that is the essential difference between the present situation and the ones to be encountered further on), under certain circumstances dissonant sounds as well may occur in passing, but regardless of the outward appearance of such situations, the principle "in the beginning is consonance" will always hold true without qualification.

Free composition alone can dispense with an actual distinct extension in time of the organizing tone (such as is provided by the *cantus firmus* in the exercises of the later species) and posit only ideal tones that can be expected to bear the burden of dissonances. Yet these ideal tones certainly are so completely present in our consciousness that they can, in this sense, again be described as actual. First and foremost in free composition it is the scale degrees that have their own secret law of progression (*Harmony*, §76f.), and precisely our intuitive familiarity with that law of progression makes plausible the assumption of those ideal tones that lie outside the realm of actual voice leading.

Regardless of all the freedom of free composition, even there the first principle of the theory of counterpoint—"In the beginning is consonance!"—has practical significance: even in free composition, that which, as dissonance, cannot and may not be substantiated, must be placed upon the foundation of consonance [FrC, §170]. If only the composers of today could at last understand how utopian it is to believe that the nature of our senses could ever grant the dissonance an equal birthright alongside consonance! The two of them, consonance and dissonance, cannot have the same role; that is assured by the basic law of nature in general: never to form a thing twice in the same way!

### §3. Why the fourth is prohibited in the vertical direction

Although we have counted as consonances, as they are used by melody in the horizontal plane, the intervals 8, 5, and 4 as perfect, and 3 and 6 as imperfect (*Harmony*, §73 and above, Part I, Chapter 2, §10), in the vertical direction a single exception must be made. Specifically it is the fourth which here, in the vertical direction, must count as a *dissonance*, and which is therefore prohibited altogether.

The reason for this prohibition is the following. As we learned in Part I, Chapter 2, §13, the fourth, as a boundary-interval of the harmonic triad, is inferior to the fifth as original boundary-interval in that it is gained only through the artifice of inversion, therefore by a secondary method. As an inverted boundary-interval, it calls attention immediately to the fact that it lacks the perfection of the fifth; moreover, it is the situation of the vertical direction, so essentially different from that of the horizontal line, that causes the lack of perfection suddenly to effect a real distortion, while the same lack in the horizontal direction could not necessitate a prohibition. In the horizontal direction specifically, as mentioned in the passage cited above, the successive occurrence of the melodic tones gives our musical perception time, so to

speak, and at least permits us to make the necessary detour by way of the fifth; but in the vertical direction, the simultaneity of attack of the two voices unfortunately simply makes it impossible to sense the corresponding original fifth ahead of time. The simultaneity that characterizes the vertical direction is a *fait accompli* in the face of which we cannot but arrive too late at a perception of the fifth. From this it follows that at the instant in which two tones sound together in the interval of a fourth, just this fact of simultaneity forms an obstacle, and indeed an abrupt one, to any approach to the perfection of the boundary-interval as it is manifested by the fifth, even by way of a detour. Since the effect of perfection (as shown by the fifth) is not to be attained, even after the fact, we can only content ourselves with investigating—at least after the fact—whether the vertical fourth actually strove to represent the inversion of an original fifth and in this sense also to form the boundary-interval, or perhaps something different; for a vertical fourth, just because it is barred from expressing the triadic boundary with absolute clarity—a deficiency which, as we know, must immediately transform the perfect consonance into a dissonance!—, can also represent a suspension or an accented passing tone of dissonant character.

A two-voice model may serve at first to illustrate vividly the uncertainty that attends the vertical fourth: is the fourth [in a given case] the boundary-interval of a triad, as at a in the following example, or a suspension as at b, or an accented passing tone as at c?

#### Example 152

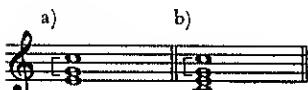
a) boundary interval?  
 b) suspension?  
 c) accented passing tone?

To put it differently, the doubt attendant on the vertical fourth about whether it pretends to be an inversion of the fifth and, as such, a perfect consonance, or whether it is merely a suspension or something similar, arises from the following: the simultaneity of the two tones that form the fourth prevents an expression of the character of the boundary-interval (which can also be intrinsic to the fourth) with the same absoluteness and perfection as it is characteristically expressed by the fifth. But here in this new [vertical] situation, where uncertainties about whether the fourth is not perhaps a suspension or the like—uncertainties that were unknown, indeed impossible, in the horizontal direction—, this lesser degree of perfection must at once become the cause that demotes the fourth in this case (but note well: only as an exception!) to the rank of a dissonance.

Conversely, to pursue the problem of the fourth, it follows that the fourth immediately realizes its original potential as a consonance once it is relieved of the pressure of (boundary-interval) competition with the fifth—that is, once its character as a boundary interval at least stands no longer so strongly and

exclusively in the foreground. This is the case, for example, when in a setting for three or more voices the fourth does not appear as the lowest interval (in which case the old uncertainty would flare up once again), but rather in the upper voices. For example:

Example 153



For in this situation, heard upward from the bass, the first effect at a is that of a third, E—C, and after it a sixth E—C; and at b a third, C—E, a fifth, C—C, and finally an octave, C—C. In no case do the fourths stand any longer in the foreground, least of all as excessively obtrusive boundary intervals.

To put it still another way: the quality of being a dubious boundary-interval of second rank, which attends the fourth even in the cases cited above, is completely redeemed by the more penetrating and more unambiguous effects of the intervals formed against the lowest voice.

The deficiency of the fourth as a boundary-interval in comparison with the fifth in this situation, incidentally, is so unobtrusive that even the augmented fourth must be allowed here; for example:

Example 154



—especially in consideration of the fact that the disagreeable juxtaposition of the tones B and F in the same diatony (see *Harmony*, §§17, 18, 58, and 65) makes occasional encounters of the two tones in counterpoint (especially of more than two voices) simply unavoidable.

In free composition, of course, the scale degrees provide a point of reference for quicker and easier orientation regarding the character of the fourth as lowest interval. For example:

Example 155

Haydn, Variations in F Minor

Ab maj: I — VI — II — V —

etc. to F min.

I

Ab

Here, specifically, our harmonic sense expects at the second quarter of bar 2 after the  $F^7$  (representing VI) a falling fifth to  $B_b$  (representing II); and even if the latter harmony is expressed only through the inversion with the fourth [i.e., the  $\frac{4}{4}$ -position]—in other words, less perfectly—, our feeling for scale degrees is nevertheless, by virtue of its logic and strength, fully able to deal quickly with the imperfection of the boundary-interval and with the moment of uncertainty (about whether it actually is a boundary-interval or not), and to decide that here the fourth is intended exclusively as the inversion of the fifth. The same holds true in the following bar with respect to the falling fifth  $E_b$ — $A_b$  (V—I) at the second quarter, which, in the light of what has preceded, we hear as nothing other than a fifth  $A_b$ — $E_b$  within the tonic triad [FrG., §§244–245]. Compare *Harmony*, Example 55, bars 3–4, and Example 88, bars 17, 18, and 19!

Obviously the motion of the lowest voice gains fluency precisely by avoiding the fifth-leap at the change of harmony and by taking advantage instead of the  $\frac{4}{4}$ -position of the new scale degree. Thus the bass is spared the necessity of a strong leap, and it is provided with a more restful movement; and free composition favors the  $\frac{4}{4}$ -position for reasons of economy also in situations like the following:

## Example 156

a) Wagner, *Tristan und Isolde*, Act III

A-flat major:  $\frac{6}{4}$  — V

b) Brahms, Intermezzo Op. 117 No. 2

E-flat minor:  $\frac{6}{4}$  — II — V —  $\frac{6}{4}$

Pedal point:  $\frac{6}{4}$  (followed by VI-II etc.)

Such a procedure must be clearly distinguished, however, from the effect of a  $\frac{4}{3}$ -position which is merely an internal component of an organ point; compare *Harmony*, Examples 73, 76, and 81. Finally, it is appropriate here to caution against the misuse of the  $\frac{4}{3}$ -chord that is encountered all too often today, in which the intention is merely to keep the bass tone unchanged as long as possible!

Free composition has yet another resource that provides all sorts of benefits to fourths that function as the lowest interval: it adds abstract scale degrees below them, and thereby turns them once again into upper voices [*Counterpoint II (Cpt. II)*, p. 2], as here:

## Example 157

Schumann, Piano Quintet Op. 44, I

(1. h.)  $\frac{6}{4}$  \* \* *molto cresc.* *rit.*

Here, scale degree V of E-flat—which, incidentally, is made explicit by the two flanking octaves B-flat<sup>1</sup> and B-flat—consigns the fourths that are apparently the lowest intervals to a higher position, where they move through as permissible passing events above the root B-flat.

Although lacking such a clear fundamental tone, similar fourths which appear in the following example are also supported by scale degrees, which our consciousness posits as a foundation for the changes of harmony:

## Example 158

J. S. Bach, English Suite No. 6, Gigue

A E<sup>#3</sup> A<sup>#3</sup> — B<sup>#3</sup> — E<sup>b5</sup> — D<sup>#3</sup> — G<sup>#3</sup> — A<sup>#3</sup> — D  
[IV — V — I] [I — IV — V — I]

Yet free composition in no way relinquishes the right to make use, under certain circumstances, of the tension that the fourth arouses (exactly as in cantus-firmus exercises) because of its ambiguous nature when it occupies the lowest position; for example:

## Example 159

Beethoven, Symphony No. 7, Allegretto

(Winds)  $\frac{6}{4}$  *pp* (Strings)

Precisely the doubts caused by the fourth, about whether we are faced here with an inversion of a minor triad on A as scale-degree I or with a freely approached suspension above the root E, as though the continuation would have to be as follows:

## Example 160

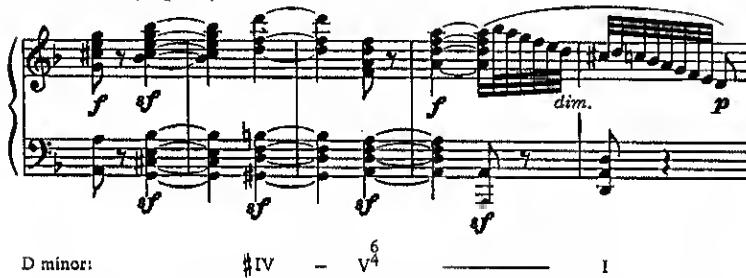


—just these uncertainties are especially well suited to provide tension in an introduction.

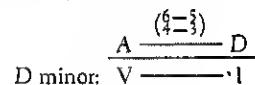
In bar 3 of the following example:

## Example 161

Beethoven, Symphony No. 9, I



the logic of scale-degree progression impels us to assume at the second quarter—especially after the raised IV (G#)—only the V; thus we first want to hear the fourth as a suspension to the third:



But surprisingly, the expected resolution is withheld, in spite of the fact that the double basses in bar 4 have the opportunity to sound the dominant tone once again; instead there follows, at a single stroke, the tonic. Was the fourth not a suspension, then, and was the scale degree to be understood as I rather than V? In any event, it is only the fourth that can pose such riddles when it appears as the lowest interval. As we look at the events in retrospect from the vantage point of the final goal, we cannot deny having heard scale degree V before the tonic, and therefore we must assume an elision of the expected resolution ( $\frac{4}{3}$ ); nevertheless it remains true—that is, at least up to the decisive moment—that the tension of the fourth alone was the precondition for our expectation and our deception. (Observe at the same time how Beethoven, at the beginning of the last bar in the above example, tries at least belatedly to satisfy our frustrated expectation of the dominant by means of the two modest

thirty-second notes c $\sharp$ <sup>2</sup> and d<sup>2</sup>; in particular, the c $\sharp$ <sup>2</sup>, in its tiny slot, sounds like a final parting glance which does not completely succeed in attaining the object of its longing, the harmony of the dominant.

A similarly ingenious construction with a  $\frac{4}{3}$ -chord in Schumann's *Waldszenen* no. 1, eighth bar from the end, may be compared with this.

In Fux, Chapter XVII, p. 38ff., we read:

Who can fail to see that [Example 162] by no means contains the fourth, but [rather] the fifth and octave? For intervals are to be measured with reference to the bass note [Grundton], not the middle components. . . . But if one understands the fourth, which derives from the arithmetic division [see example 163], then I fail to comprehend how such a thing could be included among the consonances.

## Example 162

Fux I, 2



## Example 163

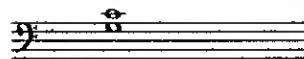
Fux I, 4



Anyone [who did so] would have to believe that it was regarded as a consonance by the ancients not only in concept (because the interval originates in the direct division of the octave), but also in practice. I will not dispute it if someone chooses to make this claim; but the practice of so many centuries appears indeed to speak against such a conclusion, and we must proceed in accordance with that practice; because experience now teaches that the employment of the fourth in no way deviates from that of the other dissonances<sup>1</sup> in that it likewise is introduced only as a syncopation or by means of a ligature. The fourth certainly sounds less strident than the other dissonances, and is more tolerable to the ear; yet the sense of hearing is not completely gratified in perceiving the interval, for example:

## Example 164

Fux I, 5



but obviously awaits the arrival of the fifth below:

## Example 165

' Fux I, 6



With what delicate language Fux pries at the deeply buried mystery of the fourth-turned-dissonance: he refers to the doubt about whether the fourth in the situation under consideration is not merely the inversion of the fifth, a doubt that is held to be the reason the ear still is "not completely gratified." But how insecure and timid the conclusions he draws therefrom!

Let us hear *Bellermann* on the subject (p. 128ff.):

III. In this third class, which stands as though between the consonances and dissonances, we include the perfect fourth and the tritone along with the diminished fifth. As we saw earlier, the first of these, the perfect fourth, as inversion of the perfect fifth, is to be counted among the original intervals, and stands in the simple vibration ratio of 3:4, while the other two intervals originated only indirectly and exhibit the most complex vibration ratios in the diatonic scale (namely 32:45 and 45:64); nevertheless all three will be treated in certain cases to be discussed later as imperfect consonances, and in other cases, in contrast, as authentic dissonances. For the sake of clarity, I shall here discuss the intervals in question individually:

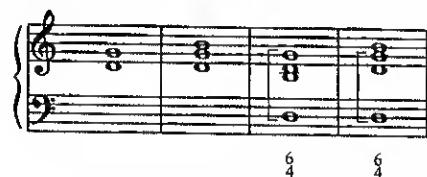
(a) The perfect fourth is always a dissonance in two-voice counterpoint:

## Example 166



and also in settings of three, four, and more voices when the lower of its two tones is also the lowest of a chord consisting of three, four, or more voices—thus always in the  $\frac{4}{3}$ -chord, as here:

## Example 167



It appears as an imperfect consonance, however, when it is produced by two inner or upper voices. If we add to those tonal combinations above [in Example 167] a lower consonant tone, then, the fourth between the inner or upper parts loses its dissonant quality and becomes an imperfect consonance:

## Example 168



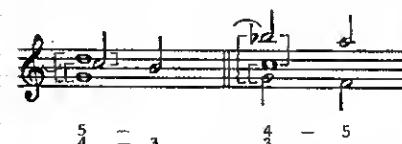
This phenomenon can be explained as follows: we view the lowest voice of a chord as the basis (*Grund*) upon which the higher voices are constructed, and we measure the [remaining] tones from this basis. Now if we add to a fourth a third, lower tone that is consonant with the two tones of the fourth (thus either the lower octave or the lower sixth of the upper tone of the fourth), then the ear hears in the first case, measuring from the bass, a fifth and an octave, and in the second case a third and a sixth; and the fourth that lies between the upper voices appears to vanish completely.

Such a disappearance of a dissonance through an added bass tone occurs, of course, only in the case of the fourth, which by its very nature is actually a consonance.<sup>2</sup>

Here I interrupt Bellermann and ask, in reference to all of this, just the following: why, then, was the fourth described as a dissonance in two-voice counterpoint? Bellermann appears not to notice that he has in the meantime simply assumed and proclaimed the transformation of the fourth to a consonant state as a *fait accompli*; without having demonstrated it; and when, in conclusion, he arrives at the statement quoted above that the fourth is "by nature actually a consonance," then his initial principle, "the perfect fourth is always a dissonance in two-voice counterpoint," makes no sense at all. What, then, has Bellermann demonstrated? Nothing except that the fourth ceases to be a dissonance if it is not the lowest interval; but this presupposes that he would have been obliged earlier to demonstrate that the fourth begins to be a dissonance exactly when it occupies the lowest position. Just this, however—the most important thing of all—is missing in Bellermann's discussion of the problem.

Bellermann continues: "It is a different matter, on the other hand, when two upper voices stand in a truly dissonant relationship, for example that of a second or seventh. These intervals, because of their very complex vibration ratios and because they are actually dissonances, can never go unnoticed by the ear." Unfortunately I must interrupt Bellermann again: it is completely unwarranted to make so essential a distinction between a fourth and any other dissonance between the upper voices, since even in cases like these:

## Example 169



we hear primarily, in relation to the bass, at a the fourth and fifth rather than the fourth and second, and at b the fourth and third rather than the fourth and seventh.

The truth is, rather, that when a dissonance crops up between two upper voices, such as the second or seventh in the above examples, the dissonant quality of these intervals in the upper voices is due less to their own nature than to the fact that they cannot both be accommodated by the same triad. It is only because a fifth and a fourth cannot both at the same time be components of the same triad that they dissonate against each other in the upper voices as well; and, depending on register, form sometimes a second and sometimes a seventh. But it is clear that this is completely insignificant in comparison to the more important fact that a tone is dissonant precisely in relation to the bass, and in comparison to the question of exactly how it is dissonant with the bass; and thus, in regard to Bellermann's argument, the question remains open of why the fourth is a dissonance only when it is the lowest interval, since it is no longer dissonant when it appears among the upper voices; and there is no point in considering the precise identity of the interval in question, whether consonant or dissonant, whether a fourth, second, or seventh.

Concerning the augmented fourth, finally Bellermann states (p. 129): "the augmented fourth (the tritone), however, together with its inversion, the diminished fifth, both of which will be discussed later, form a characteristic exception to the foregoing observations." And on p. 130:

(b) The tritone and its inversion, the diminished fifth, were used by the early composers only in rare cases as actual dissonances on the arsis.<sup>3</sup> . . . Between two inner voices, however, or between an inner voice and the upper voice, both intervals occur relatively frequently, and then, like the perfect fourth, they have the rights of an imperfect consonance. The bass tone that accompanies them, however, must stand in a consonant relation to each of their tones. Accordingly, there is but one type of combination in which they are usable, namely:

Example 170



The authors R. Louis and L. Thuille approach the problem of the fourth as a transient dissonance with incomparably more acute sensitivity in their *Harmonielehre*. We read in §14 (p. 34ff):

*Sixth and fourth, in and for themselves, are nothing but undoubtedly consonant intervals; they are such, however, only to the extent and under the condition that they appear in the guise of inversions of the third or fifth respectively.* The reason is that for the ear, which perceives harmonically, it is not the consonant interval that is primary, but the consonant chord (the triad). Perfect octave, perfect fifth, and major and minor third are consonant intervals to musicians only because they are constituents of the major or minor triad; the contrary proposition—that the consonance of the major and minor triad might derive from an assemblage of "consonant intervals"—is incorrect.

If harmonic context must always decide whether the intervals of fourth and sixth in a given case are to be regarded as inversions, and therefore as consonant, or as embellishments (suspensions or passing tones), and therefore dissonant, an important distinction between the two intervals is immediately revealed when we compare them with respect to this dual nature that they possess. *In the case*

*of the sixth, its interpretation as an interval by inversion is the more plausible, while the fourth, on the contrary, is more easily heard as dissonant than as inversion of a consonant interval.* This becomes evident if we consider the two intervals in isolation.

If we play a major or minor sixth, we immediately hear it as the inversion of a minor or major third, thus as an undoubtedly consonant interval. Any different interpretation (perhaps as a suspension preceding a fifth) would have to be forced upon our perception by the context in which the sixth occurred; it would arise only if, for one reason or another, we were to find the first interpretation inadequate. The ear has for the consonant interpretation of the sixth what legal scholars call *presumtio juris*: the sixth counts as consonant until it is convincingly proven otherwise.

The opposite applies to the perfect fourth. If we hear that interval in and for itself, we do not at first think of the inversion of the fifth; instead, we immediately hear a suspension preceding a (major or minor) third. The harmonic sense *presumes it to be dissonant*, and we admit the consonant interpretation only when the context compels us to do so.

Thus the old controversy of *whether the fourth is to be regarded as a consonance or a dissonance* is definitively settled. On the purely acoustical side, the fourth is a consonance, and indeed exclusively a consonance. But this acoustical concept of consonance is of no concern at all to the musician as such. With respect to *harmony*, the fourth can be *either consonance or dissonance*, depending on whether the ear interprets it as inversion of the perfect fifth or as (upper) embellishment to the major or minor third (or possibly also as lower embellishment to the perfect fifth). The characteristic of the musical effect of the fourth, however, resides in the fact that its *interpretation as embellishment—especially, indeed, in the case of the isolated fourth—is the more obvious*. This, then, is the reason for the old contrapuntal rule that in two-voice strict counterpoint the fourth is always to be treated as a dissonance.<sup>4</sup>

In regard to an interpretation so far superior to, for example, Bellermann's, I am really sorry not to be able to affirm that, as the authors claim, the old controversy has been definitively settled. For just the most profound level at which their interpretation arrives is itself in need of further independent clarification. It is not enough to say that our "harmonic sense presumes the fourth to be dissonant" because "its interpretation as embellishment—especially, indeed, in the case of the isolated fourth—is the more obvious," regardless of the fact that, as the Haydn example [155] above has shown, this presumption is only a conceit which sometimes even vanishes under the strength and overriding power of the scale degrees (which can indeed substitute a different presumption). Just for this reason, the first task would be to explain why one interpretation is more obvious to our perception than the other. That the two authors themselves sensed this basic flaw in their argument is proven best of all by the fact that they sought an answer to the fundamental question. They make this known in a footnote (pp. 36-37):

Treatment of the question of why the fourth and sixth differ so thoroughly in respect to their consonant or dissonant interpretation actually does not belong to the domain of our considerations. Yet it should be indicated at least briefly that here an element enters the picture which indeed does not count as a primary feature (as was believed earlier) but perhaps as an important secondary

one under certain circumstances for the judgment of consonance and dissonance: specifically, the degree of *agreeability* (that is, of "euphony") of intervals. It can be verified that, all else being equal, an interval will *more readily be heard by the ear as a consonance the more euphonious* it is. Now of all the usual consonant intervals, the *perfect fourth* sounds decidedly the *least agreeable*, and in any case far more disagreeable than the major and minor sixth, and this may well be the cause of the difficulty of its interpretation as a consonance.

To this, however, I believe that only the following answer was to be given: only the imperfection of the fourth as a boundary interval should be taken into consideration and cited as the reason the ear must experience doubt about the meaning of a fourth that occurs as the lowest interval—doubt which alone, for an otherwise perfect consonance, would have to suffice in this situation to judge the fourth as dissonant. A discussion of the sixth cited by the authors in this connection, however, is the subject of the following paragraphs.

#### §4. More detailed differentiation among the permissible consonances

The *unison* materializes with full clarity only in counterpoint of two voices—specifically, as the coincidence of two different voices in respect to the absolute as well as relative pitch placement (*Höhe*) of a tone.<sup>5</sup> While it can be accepted in the horizontal direction, if at all, most propitiously in the form of a tone-repetition—and this not in the cantus firmus itself, but, as we shall later see, only in the added voice—, here, in the vertical direction, it is for the first time a real and independent interval, in spite of the fact that it clearly remains foreign to the overtone series.

By contrast it is the overtone series itself that provides valuable implications for practice in regard to the other consonances. (Compare also the pertinent remarks in Part I, Chapter 2, §§11–15.)

It is the overtone series that affirms that the *octave* is the most perfect interval, since it manifests identity of pitch-class (*Ton*) coupled with differentiation only in pitch (*Höhe*).

After the octave comes the *fifth*, somewhat less perfect at the outset in that it no longer represents merely a repetition of the fundamental but rather sets a new tone against it. Yet this new tone expresses most perfectly a new property—specifically, by forming the ultimate boundary of the triadic jurisdiction (*Dreiklangswirkung*) of its fundamental tone. That is: since the fifth belongs to its fundamental as a boundary in such a way that there is nothing "beyond" it without violating [the properties of] unity and consonance,<sup>6</sup> perfection is achieved in the fifth—albeit in a sense different [from that of the octave]—precisely by virtue of this unsurpassability.

The hierarchy, or valuation, of the perfect consonances, then, is as follows:

- (a) 1,
- (b) 8,
- (c) 5.

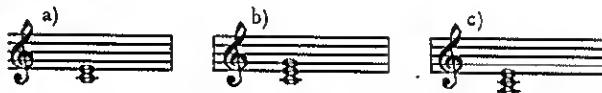
Thus from the most perfect identity of pitch-class and specific pitch, as represented by the unison, the path leads to the offspring of the overtone series: to the octave, which, alongside differentiation of pitch, still repeats the pitch-class; and further, to the fifth, which shows differentiation of both pitch and pitch-class, but which on the other hand establishes the final and unsurpassable boundary of consonance in relation to the fundamental.

By virtue of its differentiation of both pitch-class and pitch, the fifth also provides the bridge to the *imperfect consonances*:

- (d) 3,
- (e) 6.

The imperfect consonances likewise show differentiation of both pitch-class and pitch in relation to their bass notes; but they are distinguished from the fifth in that they are not boundary intervals and therefore are unable to demarcate the harmonic content of a bass note. Rather, they form the content of a triad demarcated by means of a fifth, and therefore it is not possible to determine from these intervals alone the specific triad of which they form the content. For example, does the third at a in Example 171 belong to the triad at b or that at c?

Example 171



The overtone series, to be sure, presents us with the major *third*, and in this sense it also evokes the assumption that the third C—E of Example 171 might best be counted as part of the fundamental C. Yet it is impossible to do better than such an assumption—especially in the case of the minor third!—and to gain so secure a foundation as for the perfect consonances. The same applies to the *sixth*, except that the latter, unlike the third, is not even ratified by the overtone series itself, but is to be regarded only as the inversion of the third.

We may now be inclined to ask, however, why the *sixth*, like the *fourth*, should not be prohibited in two-voice counterpoint because of its simultaneity and the consequences resulting from it; after all, it too is an inversion—namely, of the *third*.

The answer is this: first, in the case of the *sixth* the boundary-interval problem does not come into consideration at all, so that the other issue of the detour (specifically, in this case, through the *third*) is not complicated, as was the case with the *fourth*, by the more important boundary-interval question. Clearly, the latter issue must be of greater import, because it has the final say regarding the possible consonant content and thereby provides the very *raison d'être* for the *third* as an interior consonance.

Secondly, the sixth, like the third, is only an imperfect consonance, and, as such, is by origin less sensitive in every respect than the perfect fourth. That is, while the fourth (see §3 above) possesses such purity and perfection that any mutation causes it to slip immediately into a state of dissonance (diminished or augmented fourth), the imperfection of the third makes it more tolerant. Both major and minor thirds retain their character as consonances; precisely for this reason, the process of inversion must cause less damage in the case of these intervals. Indeed, one might say that the imperfection of the third does not suffer when, by inversion into a sixth, it becomes even a degree more imperfect.

For two-voice counterpoint, then, the practical use of both imperfect consonances, all intrinsic differences between them notwithstanding, is permitted without restriction, even if for the purposes of doubling in three- or four-voice counterpoint, as we shall see later, the third, for the reason just presented, is in principle accorded that priority over the sixth [Part 4, Chapter I, §1] which is its due as a better interval.

Finally it should be stressed here that the inversions under consideration, the fourth and the sixth, are to be understood only in the sense of the voice leading of contrapuntal practice—thus in contrast to the inversions taught by the theory of harmony in an abstract way relative to the meanings of scale degrees. Thus it is entirely inappropriate for the theory of harmony, in presenting the chord of the  $\frac{4}{3}$ , to abjure the fourth as a dissonance. Rather, it is the task of harmonic theory merely to elucidate the phenomenon in question purely conceptually first of all as a possible derivative of another, fundamental and original, phenomenon, with which the  $\frac{4}{3}$ -chord in that case must share the position and significance of a scale degree.

Thus the theory of harmony, to return to the Haydn passage in §3 above, Example 155, has only to teach that the  $\frac{4}{3}$ -chords in bars 2 and 3, to the extent that they represent inversions (in accord with the demands of the scale degrees) rather than suspensions, do indeed form inversions of the triads on Bb and Ab respectively, and therefore share with those triads the significance of scale degrees.

After the foregoing observations on the sixth (cf. §3), I must, therefore, respond here to Messrs. Louis and Thuille that, whatever presumption one may have about the sixth, it is not permissible to view that interval as turning into a dissonance, not even when it occurs in the form of a suspension. There exist, indeed, consonant syncopations and suspensions (see Chapter 4), and this may be the best point of departure for judging the different natures of fourth and sixth: only because the fourth is otherwise perfect, it must become really dissonant once it no longer has that perfection, as is the case in two-voice counterpoint when it appears as the lowest interval. The sixth, however, even when it is no longer an inversion but rather a suspension, still retains its character as a consonance—an imperfect consonance to be sure, which, incidentally, is what it has been from the very beginning. Therefore it is at least insufficiently cautious when the cited authors write: "The sixth counts as consonant until it is convincingly proven otherwise."

### §5. The three types of relative motion of voices

Two voices can move in any of three different ways in relation to one another; specifically:

1. *Similar motion (motus rectus)*, where both move in the same direction—that is, both upward or both downward; for example:

Example 172



2. *Contrary motion (motus contrarius)*, where the voices proceed in different directions; for example:

Example 173



And finally,

3. *Oblique motion (motus obliquus)*, where one voice sustains, while the other moves in either direction; for example:

Example 174



### §6. The prohibition of similar motion to perfect consonances in two-voice counterpoint

The consonances unison, octave, and fifth *must not be approached by similar motion in the exercises of two-voice counterpoint*.

The restriction applies in two-voice writing—and *only* there—to *all cases*, regardless of whether the preceding interval is (1) another perfect consonance or (2) an imperfect consonance.

In the first case, incidentally, it makes no difference whether the two perfect consonances have the same name, as here:

Example 175



or different names, as here:

Example 176

In the second group, obviously, no such distinction exists:

Example 177

Moreover, within the exercises of two-voice counterpoint, even in examples of *contrary* motion such as:

Example 178

or:

Example 179

the inversional character of the fourth- and sixth-leaps (cf. Part 1, Chapter 2, §§13 and 15) is set in sharper relief in accordance with the ear's heightened sensitivity, just here in the realm of two-voice writing, to ways of approaching perfect consonances. (The reasons for this sensitivity will be discussed in the following paragraphs.) Add to this the fact that, as a result, our instinctual sense of the original intervals (fifth and third rather and fourth and sixth)

compels us to translate the contrary motion back into simple parallel motion as shown, and it follows that at least in the exercises of two-voice counterpoint we should avoid even such contrary motions (which are known as *antiparallels*) to perfect consonances. Such avoidance is facilitated by the fact that a moderate distance between the voices, so long as it is actually observed (see §24 below), will exclude any opportunity for such antiparallels, which, as Examples 178 and 179 show, require such a large separation.

### §7. On the nomenclature of the prohibited similar motions

Because, as I shall presently show, the old theory unfortunately misunderstood the true reason for the prohibition, it characterized the cases in Example 175 as "open" octave- or fifth-successions, in contrast to all others (those in Example 176 as well as in Example 177), which it designated "hidden" successions. At the outset let us agree at least that instead of a variable nomenclature—one speaks, for example, of "parallels" in general, of "similar" and "unequal-similar" motion, and finally, most frequently, of "open" and "hidden" successions—it is perhaps most correct (if, unfortunately, not also shortest) for the sake of consistency to speak only of *parallel* unisons, octaves, or fifths, and (in preference to "hidden" successions) of *nonparallel similar motion* (which is understood as referring to progression to the unison, octave, or fifth).

I say "for the sake of consistency" because in the case of so-called hidden successions it is very misleading to speak of actually "parallel" motion, a designation which, in the strictest sense, correctly applies only to the "open" successions.

But one could, while completely avoiding the older nomenclature, speak of "similarly-named unison-, octave-, or fifth-successions" and (instead of nonparallel similar motion) of "similar nonparallels."

### §8. The reasons for the prohibition of similar motion to the perfect consonances in general

The prohibition of similar motion to the perfect consonances in exercises of two-voice counterpoint is based in general on several discernibly different but simultaneously operative reasons:

First, the nature of the perfect consonances (as emphasized in §4 of this chapter), which is to provide either identity of tone or boundary of the harmonic content;

Second, the character of similar motion in general and how it differs from oblique and contrary motion; and finally

Third, the original meaning of polyphony in general,

to which it should be added that in individual cases sometimes one and sometimes another of these factors will predominate.

The first factor, which concerns the *harmonic boundary*, has already been discussed.

The second factor, *similar motion*, is to be interpreted in its psychological effect as a kind of agreement between the two voices to strive toward a common goal; in this respect it contrasts with oblique and contrary motion, whose differentiation of direction acts, conversely, to rule out such agreement.

The third and last of the points mentioned implies that if *two-voice* counterpoint is to have any meaning at all, the second voice, like the first, must be individual—that is, must have an independent course.

To make clear the application of the above rules to specific cases, I now proceed to investigate them in order, beginning with the parallel successions.

#### §9. Unison- and octave-parallels (1—1 and 8—8)

The exclusion of unison- and octave-parallels as successions of the two unisons or octaves rests mainly on the third reason cited above—that is, on the simple understanding that the added counterpoint must never be a mere repetition of the first voice, whether in unisons or in octaves.

It is self-evident, however, that the other reasons also support this restriction.

#### §10. Fifth-parallels (5—5)

With fifth-parallels, however, I believe that the first two reasons stand in the foreground.

To find ample cause for this restriction, one need only consider the effect of a direct transition from one harmonic entity so explicitly bounded as a fifth to another equally bounded entity, especially in two-voice counterpoint, where, in the interest of stronger motivation [to move forward] (about which more detail will be provided in §22), any such boundedness is to be avoided wherever possible. So far the first reason.

If the fifth is approached through oblique or contrary motion, as for example:

Example 180

then, at least, it sounds as though the two voices have arrived at the undesirably bounded entity of the fifth merely by accident, so to speak. Such a coincidence is less propitious, however—and this is the second aspect—in the case of similar motion, which (see §8 above) here can only signify completely conscious pursuit of that faulty succession of undesirably bounded entities.

But why would the voices be allowed, above all as matter of general principle, to seek out consciously a fault of this kind?

#### §11. Nonparallel similar motion to perfect consonances

Similar motion, which we have just interpreted as the common agreement of two voices to strive toward a common goal, and have therefore recognized as the compromising element that contributes to the prohibition of parallel perfect consonances, operates in an equally compromising manner for non-parallel similar progressions to perfect consonances—thus, for similar motion from non-unisons, non-octaves, and non-fifths to unisons, octaves, and fifths.

To invoke here the older terminology of so-called “open” and “hidden” successions—interpreting it differently, to be sure, from the way it was originally conceived—we could say that through similar motion even the so-called hidden succession is really turned once again into an open one: “open,” however, only in the sense of the agreement, made manifest through similar motion, of both voices to reach the same goal.

Nonparallel similar progressions, then, like the true parallels, remain categorically forbidden in two-voice counterpoint.

But if similar motion contributes to the bad sound and resulting inadmissibility of non-parallel similar progressions in two-voice counterpoint, it is nevertheless completely unnecessary to give credence to that older theory which tried, in a manner most complicated and at the same time naive, to reduce the “hidden” successions to “open” ones in order to exclude them. The older theory<sup>7</sup> labored under the delusion of the need to fill in the leap of the one voice with a so-called diminution, so that a tone appeared which then actually formed an open succession with the other voice:

Example 181

The designation “hidden” succession has to do with the fact that therein a true “open” succession was allegedly concealed. Such a glaring hiatus between the artistically correct perception of a necessary prohibition, and a grotesque and forced justification of correct instinct!

The interpretation was so contrived that it has long been easy to make fun of its unnaturalness.<sup>8</sup> But what was the point of ridicule without the proposal of a more satisfactory explanation, which would have been accompanied by a more satisfactory nomenclature? Certainly, it appeared easiest of all simply to rescind altogether the prohibition of hidden progressions (as has been done in many quarters)—a solution that would necessarily have eliminated the question of nomenclature. But artistic instinct, which always felt the need for the prohibition, has proven correct to this day, and all that

can be done about it—which certainly is so very difficult—is to formulate the artistically correct reason for it in convincing language.

### §12. *Refutation of the claim that octave- and fifth-parallels manifest the same doubling-principle*

The attribution of such special reasons for the injunction in two-voice counterpoint against octave- and unison-parallels on the one hand, and fifth-parallels on the other, must here, however, be more precisely grounded from the *historical* standpoint as the definitive solution of the problem of parallel motion.

As is well known, the first experiments of polyphonic music began with the addition to a given melody of parallel motion precisely in fourths and fifths (so-called *organum*). From this one might be tempted to conclude that the poor effect of extended fifth-successions had been perhaps only a conceit of later epochs, since in earlier ones, as is historically documented, a contrary practice was doubtless the norm.

The actual fact, however, is different. In that early period there existed as yet no artistic experience of polyphony whose correct interpretation would have been the only possible basis for a true theory of art—theory, indeed, can only follow art, interpreting and abstracting; therefore theory, or what was at that time considered theory, had on the contrary to establish the first guidelines for practice. And since theory was certain that the fifth is a perfect consonance, it was naive enough to set as a guideline the simple doubling of the melody in fifths or fourths: can perfection upon perfection (so theory reflected) produce anything other than a perfect effect? Thus the practice of *organum* was based on fifth-successions, which could be called actual fifth-doublings—“doublings” specifically in the same sense in which we speak today of octave “doublings.” But the teachings of theory in this respect were soon revealed to be completely inartistic and flawed, for the specific reason that theory, trapped as it was in its purely speculative view of the perfection of the fifth, had no artistic notion that value and beauty of effect in the combination of voices issued from sources other than merely those of perfect intervals. And when the practice of the ensuing period in fact—partly perhaps in the mere quest for variety, but also partly from correct artistic instinct—began to mix thirds and sixths into the setting along with fifths and fourths, it was the contrast of the intervals, emerging for the first time, which exposed their true nature in the service of voice leading. Exactly the contrast to thirds and sixths made composers notice how bounded in effect was the sound of the fifth—even a single fifth, but especially in a succession of fifths! And also, contrariwise, how the fifth revealed the nature of the third and sixth—specifically the fact that they, far from lending a bounded quality to the sound, rather, through their equivocality (*Mehrdeutigkeit*), provided the stimulus for forward motion. And just here, in the hustle-and-bustle of thirds, sixths, and fifths, it was gradually recognized how detrimental it would be merely on the basis of the

fifth’s perfection to forget about its boundary effect in counterpoint itself, and how little the fifth is therefore suited to fill out the counterpoint by successive usage—that is, fifth by fifth—and to “double” in fifths. Finally a freshened sensitivity led to the insight that if the fifth provides the boundary of the sound, this effect, which is certainly unwelcome in the contrapuntal setting, at least should not be produced by *similar* motion—that is, through mutual agreement of both voices. And thus there arose the restriction—a kind of “rule of battle” for the warring thirds, sixths, and fifths—that in two-voice counterpoint the fifth should not be approached in similar motion. Through this well-grounded fifth-restriction—its first written formulation can perhaps be ascribed to Johannes de Muris in the fourteenth century—expression was given once and for all to the artistic awareness that a succession of fifths could never again be understood and heard from the standpoint of mere “doublings”; that rather, whether for purposes of explanation and justification or only with the aim of cultivating better hearing, only the standpoint of voice leading—and, to be sure, a thoroughly concrete voice leading (*reelle Stimmführung*)—is to be given consideration.

There are, then, no true fifth-“doublings” (however much the external appearance of the music may suggest their presence); but there are, on the other hand, doublings in unisons and octaves. One must therefore altogether avoid such terminology in relation to fifths, if only to protect the ear from incorrect ways of hearing. Thus even in a case like the following often-cited one by Beethoven:

Example 183  
Beethoven, Piano Sonata Op. 53, I



or, to mention a still more pungent example, in the following case:

Example 184  
Chopin, Mazurka Op. 30 No. 4



## Example 184 continued

one must not speak of mere fifth-“doublings”; and we will see later in which manner such voice leadings were arrived at by the composer and are to be understood by the listener.

It is highly regrettable that the lesson which so clearly teaches to artists and theorists the development of our art has not (unfortunately!) been better understood in its essence. In particular, the milieu of the first prohibition has been overlooked—that is, the fact that the experiences which had to lead to the prohibition first occurred in the domain of a counterpoint of actually only two voices, and in a terrain where the setting, though free composition, resembled very closely a primitive exercise in our two-voice [strict] counterpoint. Only in two-voice vocal counterpoint could the effects of the parallels be perceived at all in their absolute purity, and thus, on the contrary—and this precisely is the important point of the historical experience!—the prohibition, with its absolute stringency and its true justification, applied only to two-voice counterpoint. By no means is one allowed, however, to evaluate also the later polyphony in exercise and in free composition with reference to the prohibition that rightly applies first of all only to the bicinium of free composition of that [early] epoch, and thereby discover contradictions where none existed.

It redounds to the credit of M. Hauptmann that he provides at least an inkling of the truth in his *Harmonik und Metrik*: “The reason for the poor effect . . . is not the same in the two cases [of octaves and fifths]: the fifth-succession lacks unity of harmony, and the octave-succession variety of melody.”<sup>19</sup> The best feature of this formulation without doubt is the recognition that the reasons for the prohibition of fifth- and octave-parallelisms are indeed different. It should be noted, however, that the “unity of harmony” mentioned in connection with fifth-successions is an empty phrase. Although apparently pointing in the right direction, the expression goes too far, since a voice leading such as the following:

## Example 185

could also be criticized for its lack of unity of harmony. Hauptmann undoubtedly sensed the harmonic boundary provided by the fifth, but was himself unable to give more felicitous expression to that perception. In addition, like all theorists, he commits the fundamental error of testing the reasons for the prohibition applicable to two-voice counterpoint just in the domain of free composition, where they have long since ceased to be operative in a pure and unmodified form.

So much more regrettable, then, is the regression by H. Riemann, who has recently propagandized in favor of regarding the reasons for the prohibition of parallel successions as exactly the same for both octaves and fifths.<sup>20</sup> He states expressly: “Octave-parallels, as a denial of the independence of the voices, are unstylistic and false; fifth-parallels too are faulty *for the same reason*.” Further on, he elucidates more precisely:

A voice that repeatedly presents the octave-tones of the other voice is only a reinforcement of the sound of that second voice; it is not a different voice. And a voice that moves in *parallel fifths* or twelfths with a second voice *also* still blends much too completely with the latter to be regarded as an independent voice.

Thus, in order to account for the fifth-prohibition by the same reason as for the octave, he formulates the hypothesis—attractive in itself—of several different degrees of blending, according to which he attributes to the octave the strongest, to the fifth what might be called an intermediate (note the expression “still blends much too completely”), and to the third—the major third of course—the weakest degree of blending. Concerning the third, he says: “The fifth overtone, the tone that produces the third, is too weak in sound for us to overlook its independent production [in polyphonic contexts] and perceive parallel thirds too as mere doubling.”

As is evident, he bases the hypothesis on the phenomenon of the overtone series, which, incidentally, he clearly acknowledges: “The auxiliary voices on the organ give obvious proof that sonic reinforcement throughout entire compositions by means of parallel octaves, twelfths, and in general all pipes that correspond to the overtones is possible and of good effect.” And thus he arrives at the following statement:

But certainly neither parallel octaves nor parallel fifths sound bad in themselves; therefore intentional octave-doublings (sonic reinforcement by added octaves) are always good and completely permissible in orchestral writing, but they lie completely outside the domain of counterpoint in four real voices; reinforcement by parallel fifths (or twelfths), too, is not infrequent in full-textured keyboard [playing] or in full orchestral writing, but it is never to be regarded as real voice leading.

There we have it, then. Even parallel fifths, according to Riemann, are scarcely anything other than tonic reinforcement (like the octave), a doubling voice, so to speak, as in mixture stops on the organ.

This would take us back to the beginning [of art], and all evolution in artistic practice and, following it, artistic theory since the establishment of the prohibition of

parallels would prove to be completely misunderstood! And all of this stems only from the fact that the origin of the prohibition, as history teaches it, was not grasped in its relationship to musical phenomena. Riemann too is naive enough to try to understand this prohibition as completely absolute; he too claims that it must either be enforced or be rescinded in an absolute fashion. Since this position, however, will obviously have to founder on the contradictions inherent in the differences of situation (i.e. the distinction between two-voice counterpoint as opposed to that of three or more voices, as well as between an exercise and free composition), it is understandable that Riemann speaks vaguely and timidly in part of orchestral and full-textured keyboard writing, and in part of school exercises, and thus—by constantly shifting the foundation of the prohibition—is all the more unable to arrive at a definitive solution, but instead offers only a formulation that is itself so much more in need of clarification:

Even in cases of parallel fifths, today we are more permissive and allow them to pass by without admonition if they are covered up by means of contrary motion or dissonances—that is, if the ear is compensated for the decrease in textural richness (for the parallel voice disappears, so to speak, for the duration of the parallel motion) by alternative sources of interest. Parallel fifths between real voices, however, remain a stylistic error under all circumstances; they are to be banned without exception from all school exercises. If the teacher neglects to develop and intensify the natural sensitivity in his young charges for such offenses against purity of counterpoint, he must not be surprised if they completely run amok.

Such a miserably confused and at the same time naive muddle! In school exercises the student is to avoid successions of perfect fifths—because (so Riemann claims) they are, like octave-successions, merely reinforcements. Elsewhere than in school exercises, however—specifically in free composition—, according to Riemann, “parallel fifths between real voices” indeed remain under all circumstances a “stylistic error,” yet the composer may use them as a “reinforcement” and only as such. Doesn’t the truly most important issue still need clarification by Riemann? He would have to explain the following: first, how exactly it could be determined whether a given case represented a well motivated “reinforcement” or only a true and unintentional contrapuntal and “stylistic” error (this is the point most often addressed in assessments by critics!); second, how it happens that reinforcements with fifths occur so relatively infrequently in comparison to those with octaves; and finally, third, how to reconcile with the license of fifth-reinforcements the far greater number of [parallel] fifth-successions that Riemann himself would never describe as mere reinforcements, but which he would nevertheless tend to judge in a more “permissive” way and “allow to pass without admonition” (compare the above quotation).

Are there, then, perfect fifth-successions of a different nature, successions that are permitted and do not fall within the purview of the principal criterion of the intermediate degree of blending? Are those exceptions, one must ask? Or do they lie within the purview of a different criterion? If so, then why has Riemann applied the criterion of mere doubling [valid for octave-successions] also to fifth-successions? If there are open fifth-parallels that are permitted and are not to be considered doublings, what is the point of the prohibition at all? Or, if all parallel fifth-successions are permitted in free composition anyway, isn’t the prohibition in the last analysis really only a form of intimidation, whose sole purpose to make students quake (such naive method!) before the supremacy of the “prohibiting” teacher?

To what should Riemann’s student adhere when he turns his efforts to free composition? To the prohibition or to the license—where both fundamental situations are so indefinitely defined?

But Riemann’s error lies not only in having represented fifth-successions as “doublings,” in spite of the fact that he himself inadvertently quotes different types of fifth-successions that are said not to be doublings, and that accordingly he ignores the history of the beginnings of polyphony, which has long been able to forestall the reappearance of such a false and discredited interpretation. Of far greater detriment in his case, rather, is the ignorance of purely artistic and psychological perceptions, and the forcible imposition upon art of natural phenomena—here, in particular, once again the results of the overtone series. In *Harmony* (§§10, 19, etc.) I have already called attention to the unfortunate consequences that necessarily accompany the effort to abstract art in its total content only from the overtone series. I called instead for an understanding that nature’s suggestion, as it is found in the overtone series, was taken over by artists only up to a certain limit, while from that limit forward they have, with complete originality, worked out artistic elements to which they [alone] hold title—elements which then, certainly, once again flow back into nature, but only at the very end and only in the most exalted sense.<sup>11</sup> Riemann’s error lies completely exposed precisely here, where, in his treatment of the parallel-fifths prohibition, he again takes refuge in the overtone series in order to derive the concept of blending-gradation mentioned above. For if the overtones really are only components of an indivisible sonority, and if, therefore, the [tones comprised by the] sounds known as organ mixtures are in this sense once again only elements of a single tone and can claim no independent existence whatever—their dependency is expressed already in the terms “over-,” “partial-,” or “aliquot-tones”—, then it is clear that that palpable tone which the contrapuntal voice places against the cantus firmus as fifth (or as octave or third) is never truly identical to such an overtone. Rather, the tone of the contrapuntal voice in itself represents another independent tone-phenomenon that carries its own overtones on its back, so to speak, exactly like the cantus-firmus tone against which it sounds (“an unhappy Ailas, who must carry a world, a whole world” of overtones).<sup>12</sup> Each of the two tones is, accordingly, an independent tone—the cantus-firmus tone as well as that of the counterpoint, which forms the fifth; both have their own overtones, absolutely necessary to their tone-production—two infinite columns of tones, so to speak, which are completely different and fundamentally have nothing in common. Consider too the fact that even octave doublings, which according to Riemann manifest the strongest degree of blending quality, nevertheless always signify once again only an encounter of two completely independent voices, and that the independence of the octave-tone is sensed clearly not only in orchestral writing but also—we need only think of couplings—on the organ itself. There is, therefore, a quite essential difference between the organ mixture, which is completely integrated into the sound of a single tone, and an incarnate, independent tone which, activating its own mixture, sets itself against the cantus-firmus tone as a fifth. For if the fifth in the added voice were little more than an organ mixture—the third overtone of the cantus-firmus tone—, then it would be possible to heap upon a given tone a whole world of the most indefinable tones under the label of mere reinforcement, and still expect the sound of the counterpoint to follow a satisfactory course. In short, one should be able to copy literally what the overtone series prescribes (thus [for example] the ninth and fifteenth partials as well), and the voices would nevertheless have to produce only the effect of doubling! And yet, as I see it, such a reinforcement-mannerism and -mania would even offend much

more acutely than the modern mannerism of alleged polyphony, which already produces a ghastly state of chaos. Taking its unfair advantage only from a frenetic and obfuscating tempo and, to no lesser degree, also from a misconception of the passing [dissonance], that polyphony already burdens almost every tone with a seventh—but, note well, the seventh that belongs to the [tonal] system, thus a phenomenon completely different from the seventh partial. (See *Harmony*, §10). Yet this procedure does not, as one would have to expect on the basis of the theory [of Riemann] discussed above, represent itself as mere “reinforcement,” but rather, haughtily and pretentiously, as true voice leading, in short: “polyphony.” While the error of the modern artist, who unfortunately has only a decayed instinct left for his creative work, can often be demonstrated to be bad, I mean objectively bad—for example, in its overestimation of the capacity of a scale degree or failure to understand the technique of the passing tone, etc. (cf. *Harmony*, §89)—, it would be impossible, in spite of one’s complete distaste for it, to fend off a way of composing which, invoking nature or the overtone series, moved in the most bizarre doublings.

Although the tone of the added voice which relates to the cantus-firmus tone as its octave or fifth is therefore not *identical* to the second or third partial, the consonant relationship of the two independent tones, and accordingly the specific quality of the resulting consonance (i.e., that of the octave or the fifth), nevertheless rests on the foundation of the overtone series, albeit in a sense different from that assumed by Riemann. With all of the independence of the two tones forming the octave or fifth—each tone carrying the bequest of its own world of overtones—it is none other than Nature who confirms, according to the standard established by the meaning of octave and fifth within the overtone series, their consonant relationship and its character. In other words, since the second partial represents identity of pitch-class together with differentiation of pitch, while the third partial yields the last tonal boundary (*Grenzton*) of the comprehensible consonant space<sup>13</sup> in the form of a tone that differs in both pitch and pitch-class, this characteristic is preserved even when one completely independent tone sounds against another in such a way that either (1) identity of pitch-class together with differentiation of pitch, or (2) a final consonance-boundary together with differentiation of pitch-class is produced. Or, to quote the presentation in *Harmony*, p. 29, §14:

To the question: Which two tones are most naturally related? Nature has already given her answer. If C, for example, has revealed itself as the most potent overtone emanating from the root tone C, the potency and privilege of this close relationship is preserved also in those cases where, in the life of a composition, C meets G as an independent root tone: the ancestor, so to speak, recognizes the descendant. We shall call this primary and most natural relationship between two tones the *fifth-relationship*.

It remains to be mentioned that Riemann uses the hypothesis of blending-gradations also to support the prohibition of antiparallels, as follows:

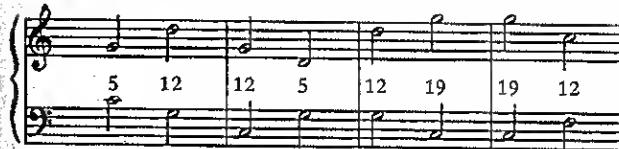
The prohibition of octave- and fifth-successions must, however, be generalized and sharpened by comparison to the formulation in which it has been handed down to us; for since unison, octave, and double-octave are not significantly distinguished from one another with respect to degree of blending quality, and since the same holds true of fifth and twelfth, all motions from the unison or octave to the double-octave and vice versa:

## Example 186



are to be prohibited as contradicting the independence of the voices; and the same applies to all motions from the fifth to the twelfth and vice versa (including also the octave-expansion of the twelfth, i.e., the 19th):

## Example 187



Unfortunately Riemann succeeded in intimidating later theorists as well, and thus the *Harmonielehre* by R. Louis and L. Thuille already contains the suggestion of at least a compromise between the points of view of Hauptmann and Riemann. There, on p. 376, we read:

If it were therefore decided to accept the Riemann explanation of the poor effect of parallel fifths as such, we nevertheless consider it necessary to invoke the Hauptmann viewpoint at least as an auxiliary theory if we want to be able to evaluate the actual occurrence of parallel fifths in a harmonic context. Accordingly, the prohibition might be formulated thus: because of the high degree of blending quality of their intervallic relationship, parallel perfect fifths (as also, to a lesser extent, parallel major thirds) can under certain circumstances produce a very poor effect. This will happen specifically, if this type of progression occurs in the direct succession of two chords that bear no mediating relationship to one another [etc.].<sup>14</sup>

To summarize all of the foregoing, we find that as errors in the theoretical justification of the prohibition of parallel fifths, the following should be cited: (1) misunderstanding of the initial artistic experiments in contrapuntal writing that led to the prohibition—that is, the thoroughly inadequate appreciation of the fact that the prohibition originally arose in the domain of counterpoint for only two voices, where it indeed still remains in full force up to the present time; and, finally, (2) evaluation of free composition in terms of prohibitions that originally apply only to exercise-situations.

With our discovery of the fact that the prohibition of parallel octaves and that of parallel fifths stem from two entirely different causes, which can be evident in their full purity only in two-voice counterpoint, we have indeed accomplished all that is necessary for the time being for the first species of two-voice counterpoint. We shall, however, following our established custom, [now] provide a deeper glimpse into

counterpoint of more than two voices as well as into free composition, and illuminate how the situations that occur in both affect the application of the prohibition. Nevertheless, we shall of course initially proceed in this only so far as is necessary to understand the problem in a general way, and therefore reserve a more detailed treatment for the proper occasions.

**§13. First introduction concerning the influence of strict counterpoint in more than two voices on the prohibition of similar motion**

The birthplace of the problem is, as we have seen, two-voice counterpoint. The latter calls attention for the first time to the inevitable consequence that (1) the succession of two unisons or octaves destroys the character of the added counterpoint as an independent voice, and (2) the succession of two fifths means an unpleasant clash of two entities that are harmonically bounded with the same degree of severity. Two-voice counterpoint reveals, moreover, that these effects are caused not by the nature of perfect consonances alone, but also by [the quality of] similar motion as such. Now it would certainly not make sense, just as we are striving to learn how one voice is to be led *independently* against another, to seek out at the same time effects that eliminate this independence or even impair the good simultaneous sound of the two voices. Therefore it is fully in order for the theory of two-voice counterpoint, striving to reconcile intent and result first of all in the proper domain of its two-voice exercises, to establish the prohibition discussed above just in this area—and this, to be sure, without discriminating between whether the progression to the perfect consonance takes place in parallel motion or only in nonparallel similar motion.

If one knows, however, that this prohibition is to be understood only as a product of the intent and the situations of two-voice counterpoint, then one will naturally avoid from the outset the error (already censured in the foregoing paragraphs) of regarding the prohibition also as an absolute one—that is, as a prohibition which, outside the domain of two-voice counterpoint, would also invariably have to regulate multiple-voice counterpoint as well as free composition. It will be found, on the contrary, that more complex situations, to the extent that they demand their own solutions, cannot satisfy the stringency of that prohibition; especially when the new factors that enter in such situations also introduce exigencies that far more urgently need satisfaction.

Thus even three-voice [strict] counterpoint—here I bypass for the moment the situations encountered in the second, third, and fourth species of two-voice counterpoint with their new differentiations—must at least in principle admit the nonparallel similar motions (the so-called hidden progressions) if it is to accomplish its central purpose of setting *two* voices against the *cantus firmus* in a state of true melodic independence. For, often enough, melodic fluency of the line itself (as precisely the chief characteristic of such independence of voices) will doubtless require that the voice include in its path exactly a tone with which such a nonparallel similar motion is associated. Thus, from the

standpoint of the higher law of independence, it will be altogether appropriate to include nonparallels into the bargain, especially as their poor effect surely recedes into the background in the face of the increased prominence of the effect achieved precisely by means of the good line. We shall see later (Part 3, Chapter 1, §22)—just to give at this point a preliminary glimpse—how in three-voice counterpoint various factors produce altogether new, stronger effects, which under certain circumstances are able to suppress the effect—always poor in itself—of nonparallel similar motion. Such factors include: (1) satisfaction of the requirements of melodic fluency in the form of smaller intervals (best of all the smallest, the second); (2) emphasis on contrary motion [of the voice not involved in the similar motion]; and finally (3) the advantage provided by a rich-sounding, complete triad.

Four-voice counterpoint, in turn—and, to be sure, again by reason of the really numerous and new difficulties attendant on the increased number of voices—, necessarily must admit nonparallel similar motions even under circumstances in which three-voice counterpoint still adheres strictly to their prohibition. Four-voice writing brings with it as an inevitable consequence the necessity that nonparallel similar motion be subject to still less stringent limitations than those required by three-voice counterpoint.

But contrapuntal doctrine does not admit at the same time into its environs also parallel motion of unisons, octaves, and fifths. These instead remain prohibited, always and everywhere, in both three- and more-voiced strict counterpoint, and, indeed, by reason of the effects cited earlier, which other factors of the setting remain too weak to cancel completely under the given limited circumstances of the *cantus firmus*.

Finally, it may not be uninteresting to mention here that the prohibition of all similar motions to perfect consonances remains from the outset so completely tailored to the first species of two-voice counterpoint that one could (assuming that one wished to) dispense, for this first species, with any further conceptual differentiation among the prohibited similar motions.<sup>15</sup> For, as is evident, it is at bottom only the situations of the other species of two-voice counterpoint—for complete clarity, however, those of three- and four-voice counterpoint (still leaving free composition out of consideration)—which, to the extent that they already tolerate and even require a certain type of similar motion to perfect consonances, now compel the theorizing artist for the first time to put a notch, in the form of a first conceptual differentiation, into this prohibition that originates in two-voice counterpoint and continues to apply there without exception. Thus, what was not at all necessary in the first species of two-voice counterpoint automatically becomes, in subsequent species, a necessity created by the new situations, so that fundamentally one would have to draw the boundary between actual parallels and merely nonparallel similar motion in the second species of two-voice counterpoint at the earliest, so as to carry the two types forward from that point on as permanent categories of similar motion.

But also apart from any particular method of systematic presentation of this problem, it nonetheless remains of essential significance for the under-

standing and evaluation of the prohibition to grasp the facts of the matter as outlined above: specifically, that the first species of two-voice counterpoint has established the prohibition in its domain as absolute, and that the differentiation of the prohibition enters the scene organically only with the differentiation of situations.

#### §14. First glimpse of the status of the prohibition in free composition

Dispensation for the use of even parallel successions finally enters only in the realm of free composition [FrC, §161].

Specifically, in free composition the changing character of the voice, whose contrast with the continuously bound real voice of the contrapuntal exercise will be demonstrated in detail in the last section,<sup>16</sup> has as an attendant consequence the fact that in order (for example) to be able to regulate the number of voices freely and at will, sometimes even parallel octaves become fully a necessity.

Concerning parallel fifths, among the forces that can successfully counteract the poor effect of nonparallel similar motion even in strict counterpoint are the principles of contrary motion, melodic fluency, and completeness of triads. In free composition, these factors are joined by others: the progression of scale-degrees and variation of [foreground] key areas are the strongest forces which, either alone or, better still, in conjunction with the forces mentioned above, can completely remove the harmful effect of even parallel fifths.

To put it differently: precisely by reason of the tonal identity present in the unison and octave, free composition uses octave- and unison-parallelism, for example as so-called "reinforcing voices" (which at the same time reduces the number of voices), and so forth. Moreover, free composition can also—but note well: always, only, under the rubric of concrete voice-leading!<sup>17</sup>—use fifth-parallelisms in abundance, by virtue of the fact that it successfully counters them with new and stronger forces still unavailable in the exercises of strict counterpoint.

Obviously, under such circumstances in free composition the nonparallel similar successions, as well as antiparallels, gain still greater freedom than they already had in three- and four-voice counterpoint.

Considering the end result, however, that free composition is, under certain circumstances, in a position to dispense entirely with the prohibition not only of nonparallel similar motion but even of parallels and antiparallels, it seems all the more curious that the prohibition should be taught at all any more, even if only in counterpoint and in the domain of exercises. For if in free composition, as one might claim, there are no longer any limitations on these progressions,<sup>18</sup> then why should any restriction be imposed in the exercises, whose results are never of practical quality anyway?

This question, however, is only apparently justified, and the answer is simple. For I have already said that only the strong motivations and counterforces that penetrate clearly and convincingly into the foreground can eliminate the effect, by nature always poor, of similar motion to perfect

consonances. This observation also explains, in different words, the fact that with every octave- or fifth-parallelism, with every nonparallel similar motion in all situations (even those of free composition), the knavery of the associated effect returns and lurks in wait for us—just as though free composition were only an exercise of two-voice counterpoint!—specifically in that the bad effect immediately impresses itself on our ear whenever the counterforces (contrary motion, melodic fluency, complete harmony, scale degree, modulation, alteration of the character of the voice, and the like) fail to work sufficiently strongly against it. Thus it remains true in free composition, for example, that the interval of the fifth produces a boundary-effect; this can even be obvious, depending on whether it was really intended or was merely the fault of lack of skill. Therefore the school [of counterpoint] must always direct the student's attention to that effect beginning in two-voice settings, even if it later provides him with means to protect himself from it as the need arises. In short, the effect of similar motion—indeed in all possible categories as taught by contrapuntal theory—remains ever a psychological reality, even where, smitten by forces of the foreground, it lurks only in the background!<sup>19</sup>

#### §15. Mode of departure from the perfect consonances in general

Since in the exercises of the present species any departure from a perfect consonance naturally also represents at the same time the approach to the next consonance, all that needs to be said about mode of departure has been covered here under the rubric of mode of approach. Therefore no further, special restrictions and prohibitions apply to mode of departure. The only exception to this is mode of departure from the unison.

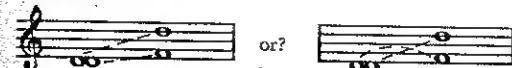
#### §16. Mode of departure from the unison in particular

The fact of complete agreement and blending of both voices as manifested by the unison obligates the voice leading subsequent to the unison to proceed with caution (which, incidentally, also best fulfills the postulate of melodic fluency); at least the voices should refrain from seeking out in an all too drastic manner a contradictory situation immediately after the unison.

If, for the problem of mode of departure from the unison, we take into consideration the three types of motion, we find the following effects:

(a) The employment of similar motion harbors the danger that ear and sense will find it difficult to decide, especially in the case of larger leaps, which path has been taken by the one voice, and which by the other. Thus here, for example:

##### Example 188



at least the danger of a confusion of voices is present, since it must appear not always completely clear which of the two  $d^1$ 's has moved to  $d^2$  and which to  $f^1$ .

(b) Oblique motion, on the other hand, by means of sustaining in one voice, provides such a strong counterforce of repose that even the largest [melodic] interval can be allowed to follow the unison, for example:

Example 189



(c) With contrary motion, finally, the danger is far more imminent of an explosive effect by the larger interval that follows the unison, just by the nature of the situation itself; for example:

Example 190



This danger is countered best of all, however, by placing an interval of more modest size after the unison, and, moreover, by moving to that interval by small steps; thus the best solution of mode of departure by contrary motion is doubtless the case in which both voices depart from each other in seconds alone, so that they meet in a third:

Example 191



The effects just described, then, yield the following advice for treatment of mode of departure from a unison:

Oblique motion takes first preference, since it is best able to avoid an explosive effect in the succession of intervals. The second best solution is contrary motion, but only under certain favorable circumstances, as described above. The least suitable possibility, finally, is similar motion, which should accordingly be avoided wherever possible in these exercises.

Since the unison, as we shall later see, is prohibited in the main body of the exercise and thus may be used only at the beginning or end in two-voice first-species counterpoint, the question here under consideration has but one practical application—specifically, when the exercise has begun with a unison. Therefore one may test the situation by examining its consequences at the very outset—that is, by determining whether or not the exercise is at all suitable for a unison beginning. For if we have to set an upper counterpoint against a cantus firmus that begins, for example, as follows (cf. p. 54):

Example 192



then it is clear that use of a unison at the beginning would immediately yield that strict necessity of precisely a case of similar motion, for example:

Example 193

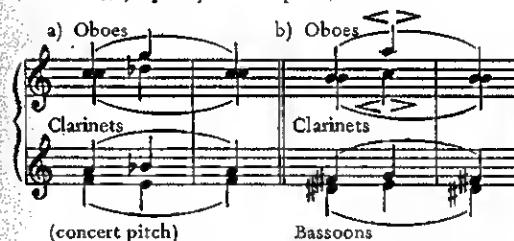


unless the device of crossing the two voices (cf. below, §27) were to be used instead; this, however, would appear somewhat out of place, at least at the beginning of an exercise. It is more advisable with such a cantus firmus to use the octave or fifth as opening interval instead of the unison itself.

How free composition proceeds according to its own expressive reasons in handling the effects described above, however, may be shown by the following examples:

Example 194

Schumann, Symphony No. 2 Op. 61, I



Here we see in the oboes the departure from a unison in similar motion to a fourth at a and even to a seventh at b; just observe, however, how much effect the composer has thereby achieved at a single stroke: measured against the unobtrusive second of the second oboe, the first oboe's detours by leap (the fifth-leaps at a and the seventh-leaps at b) only appear all the more expressive (cf. Part I, Chapter 2, §18!). Moreover, the fact that the second oboe enters the space of the first oboe's leap exactly with the interval of a second generates a good, genuine portamento effect (cf. Part I, Chapter 2, §17, especially Example 11!).

In Fux we read on p. 73:

[Aloys] it [i.e., the rubric "N.B." in the first bar of an exercise] means that

progression by leap from the unison to another consonance is not permitted, nor is progression by leap to a unison, as was explained before. But since this leap appears in a part of the cantus firmus, which is not to be changed, it may be tolerated here. It is different when one is not confined to the cantus firmus and can do as one pleases.<sup>20</sup>

This opinion, clearly, is based on a regrettable misunderstanding, not only of free composition on the one hand, but also of contrapuntal exercises on the other. The misunderstanding has misled Fux in the present instance to grant less freedom to the former than to the latter, since he deduces from the strictness of the exercises, [on the one hand,] the necessity of tolerating possible leaps from a unison, and from the freedom of free composition, on the other, the necessity of greater strictness. In fact it is just the opposite—as may be seen in example 194 above—for free composition, more often than strict counterpoint, is compelled, by reason of expressive content, to use leaps in such cases.

Treating the question in more detail than Fux, *Bellermann* teaches on p. 136:

The leap from a unison to another consonant interval in similar motion is not good in two-voice counterpoint, and thus should be avoided as much as possible. [Examples follow.] Such a leap is quite permissible, however, if one of the two voices remains stationary on its tone—thus in a case of oblique motion. [Examples follow.] In contrary motion it is likewise desirable to avoid leaps, regardless of whether one or both voices make such a leap. Nevertheless, one very frequently finds exceptions to this rule, and therefore we may be less strict in observing it.

Here *Bellermann* cites the treatise of Fux, in order to ally himself with the latter in regard to free composition. He confirms this agreement with the following words: “There is, of course, no reason [in free composition] to introduce less beautiful progressions of that kind.” What is admittedly correct in these observations is that contrary motion often cannot be avoided; in such cases, however, the reader should adhere to the relevant suggestions in the text.

### §17. *The free approach to imperfect consonances*

The approach to imperfect consonances is free, regardless of whether they are preceded by a perfect or an imperfect interval.

Similarly, all three types of motion are unconditionally permitted when they lead to an imperfect consonance, with the possible exception of the following cases.

### §18. *The possible prohibition of a succession of two major thirds*

(a) The first exception is the case of a succession of two major thirds, as they are found specifically in the pure, undiluted diatony from the fourth to the fifth degree in major and from the sixth to the seventh in minor—only a single instance [in each mode], as we know:

#### Example 195



But such thirds will constitute the exception described only if this succession forces on the ear as a *resultant* an *augmented fourth*—a *tritone*—in such an unpleasant way that the ear’s attention cannot be distracted from it by any possible later course of the voice leading. Thus in the following voice leading, on the contrary:

#### Example 196

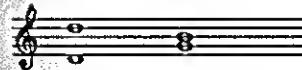


the continuation of the voices certainly cancels the resultant of the augmented fourth quite adequately.<sup>21</sup>

The reason for the prohibition of such third-successions, then, clearly lies less in the juxtaposition of *F* and *B* or in the resultant of the augmented fourth in itself than in a special instance of the latter: specifically, that in which the harshness of the [augmented] fourth-resultant strikes the ear in a particularly drastic manner because it fails to gain sufficient justification through a good subsequent resolution.

But on the other hand a voice leading like the following:

#### Example 197



is, therefore, unconditionally permitted; and from this it can be inferred that not just any encounter between *F* and *B* gives reason to apply the prohibition, but only, under especially unfavorable circumstances, an unresolved resultant of an augmented fourth. This, then, is all that can be salvaged of the so besmirched myth of what is unjustifiably known as the tritone “cross-relation” (cf. below, §28)!

(b) Within the pure diatonic system, a seventh-resultant, for example, is no more permissible than the augmented fourth-resultant arising from the succession of two major thirds, especially as it would have to remain unwarranted for other reasons as well.<sup>22</sup>

#### Example 198



On the other hand, successions of two major thirds like the following:

Example 199

presuppose from the outset a mixed<sup>23</sup> minor key (*Harmony*, §38), in which the first example represents the progression V—VI and the second the progression III—V. Assuming, then, that the student were to use a mixed minor key for the exercises, he would have to avoid completely the resultant of an augmented fifth as well, as it appears in the second example, while use of the succession in the first example would doubtless be justified without restriction.

It is well known that successions of major thirds (where possible also in series of sixth-chords) are much favored in our own time in free composition. How the latter justifies such successions may be shown first of all by an example:

Example 200

Mozart, Symphony No. 36, I

Admittedly, the scale degree alone (here, the V), with its omnipotence,

adequately justifies the series of major thirds (bars 4-5), in that it demotes them to the status of merely transient chromatic advancements through the space from g to e<sup>1</sup>. And yet the ear grasps very well too the operation of the whole process that necessarily produced this effect of transience, and we gain finally the insight that we are here dealing with only apparent major thirds, which in fact originate simply from minor thirds instead. It is astonishing how rapidly our perception functions—how it rushes with lightning speed through so many intervening stages and grasps the abbreviation:

Example 201

The illustration at a shows the normal diatonic passing tones that lie between g and e<sup>1</sup> of the lower voice and between b and e<sup>1</sup> of the upper. That is the real background of all later occurrences—the first stage, so to speak.

The illustration at b presents the chromatic filling-in of the normal diatony—at 1. in the lower voice, at 2. in the upper. This is the second stage.

The illustration at c represents the first and initially normal attempt to introduce all of the chromatic passing tones indicated under b into the two voices, while at the same time retaining the given total duration of four quarter-notes.

Yet here the two voices, for the sake of clarity and in order to preserve the passing character of the chromatic tones in a purer form, still interrelate in such an active way that at any given time only one voice executes its

passing tone, and only when the first voice has completed its advancement does the second proffer its own passing tone. Thus when the lower voice has completed its passing motion  $ab - a$  in the first quarter, the upper voice enters at the second quarter—note well that the lower voice now sustains!—with its own passing motion  $c^1 - c^{\sharp 1}$ ; at the third quarter, the second voice again waits until the first, the lower, has finished with its new passing motion  $bb - b$ , and then itself advances in the fourth quarter from  $d^1$  to  $d^{\sharp 1}$ , while the lower voice in contrast remains waiting and passive. This is the third stage.

It is easily recognized, however, that this procedure finally provides the opportunity for a more abbreviating and more complicated one (see Example 200 itself), which is precisely the fourth and final stage of the process. For if it is always only a diatonic tone which, remaining stationary itself, in the meantime provides an opportunity for the chromatic passing tone:

Diatonic Tone	Chromatic Passing Tone
Beneath $c^1$ of the upper voice	$ab - a$ of the lower voice
Above $a$ of the lower voice	$c - c^{\sharp 1}$ of the upper voice
Beneath $d^1$ of the upper voice	$bb - b$ of the lower voice
Above $b$ of the lower voice	$d^1 - d^{\sharp 1}$ of the upper voice

then it follows that, since the chromatic passing tone  $c^{\sharp 1}$  (and later  $d^{\sharp 1}$ ) must in any case chart its course above the diatonic passing tone  $a$  (and later  $b$ ), it certainly amounts to exactly the same thing if the two tones—the diatonic and the chromatic one in each case—instead of waiting and following upon one another, throw caution to the winds and run together.

The ear has come to understand that at the second quarter the third was indeed originally minor:  $\sharp^1$ , until it was enlarged to major:  $\sharp^2$  (and later  $\sharp^1$ , enlarged to  $\sharp^2$ ) only by means of preempting the chromatic passing tone; therefore it accepts unconditionally the abbreviation as well (that is, the final telescoping of the two-stage process just described into a one-stage one), relinquishes the intermediate stage of minor thirds  $\sharp^1$  and  $\sharp^2$  at the second and fourth quarters, and thus arrives immediately at the perception of major thirds in these places.

In the following example, by Brahms:

#### Example 202

Brahms, Symphony No. 4, I

Violin II

Violoncello (\*)

B minor: VI

#### The First Species: Note Against Note

the succession of major thirds in the 'cellos and violas has as its basis the fact that here scale degree VI in B minor is composed out altogether in the sense of a genuine minor. However, the harshness of the effect—an intentional harshness—in this case certainly stems far less from the succession of major thirds itself than from the severe dissonance of the passing third  $a - c^{\sharp}$  (at \*) beneath the harmonic tone  $b^1$  of the violins, and also from the rhythmic peculiarity of this modulation-motive, which begins at the second quarter.

The pair of major thirds in the following example by Wagner:

#### Example 203

Wagner, *Das Rheingold*, Scene III

Vln. I

Vln. II

C $\sharp$  minor:  $\sharp$  II (Phrygian)

originates in the fact that (1) scale degrees I and VI progressed to II by means of a falling fifth; (2) this scale degree II was lowered ( $\sharp$  II, Phrygian); and (3) within its domain the tone  $g^{\sharp 2}$ , the upper voice of the succession of thirds, was now called upon to show that we have indeed remained exclusively in the C $\sharp$ -minor diatony. To be sure,  $g^2$  could have appeared here, if Wagner had preferred to follow the drive of the II toward tonality—as though it had suddenly turned into a true D major (*Harmony*, §137)—; but simple comparison of the effect produced by  $g^2$  shows how much more elegantly the tone  $g^{\sharp 2}$  functions in this passage in the service of the diatony to be preserved. Such lovely fruit of the composing-out of scale degrees!

On the other hand, it is instructive to see how in the following example Smetana evades a succession of two major thirds and also is able thereby to achieve a certain mood:

#### Example 204

Smetana, String Quartet in E Minor ("Aus meinem Leben") I

(\*)

E minor: VI

Fux is not concerned in any particularly strict way with the succession of two major thirds, as can be seen in the following example:

## Example 205

Fux IV, 15



Fux V, 16



Albrechtsberger confronts the problem all the more energetically. He too, to state it at the outset, represents the problem only as a matter of disallowed third-successions, but completely avoids speaking *ex offo*<sup>24</sup> of a "cross-relation of the tritone" as such. Thus he writes, on pp. 21-22 under VII:

Two major thirds are prohibited in the progression of a whole step upward or downward, but not in that of a half step; [they are prohibited] also in the case of a third-leap by both voices; for in these progressions a discordant cross-relation, a *mi contra fa* arises; this is not true, however, of the leap of a perfect fourth. Two major thirds are likewise prohibited when the voices leap a perfect fifth—not because of *mi contra fa*, but because the diagonal product is a major seventh, which is always a difficult thing to seek out, whether it rises or falls in the continuation.

When we place his pertinent examples into order, we arrive at the following picture:

## Example 206

a) (with progression by whole-step)	b) (with the leap of a major 3rd)	c) (with the leap of a perfect 5th)
"poor"	"poor"	"poor"

That he permits d at all is connected to his basic way of understanding the mixed minor system, with which we are already familiar (cf. above, Part 1, Chapter 2, §9).

It also follows from the above rule that he by no means prohibits all cross-relations of F against B, but only the one that occurs along with two major thirds and thus

## The First Species: Note Against Note

leads to a prohibited fourth-resultant (see Example 206a), so that my Example 197 is equally exempt from his prohibition.

What his rule nevertheless lacks in ultimate precision is that he unfortunately neglects to say that even a progression like that at a can still be permitted under more favorable circumstances, specifically when the effect of the fourth-resultant is effaced by means of a beneficial voice leading. To be sure, an element of this idea, admittedly only unconscious and almost only in the sense of an exception, appears also in Albrechtsberger's own discussion, in the following remarks: "In a cadence with three or more voices, two major thirds ascending a whole-step are permitted, as we can see in the two last examples:

## Example 207

c. f.

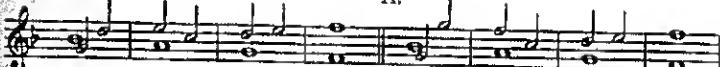


Yet this idea, in which the author appears literally to have been compelled by the spirit of harmonic theory (here the scale-degree progression II — V — I) to make an exception, unfortunately is unjustly limited to the cadence alone, and thus, as I have said, not expressed accurately enough. In the practical realm of exercises, however, he rightly attended only to the situation at hand in a given case; this can be demonstrated by the corrections, transmitted by Nottebohm, pp. 48-49, that he made to an exercise by Beethoven:

## Example 208

B.

A.



B.

A.



etc.

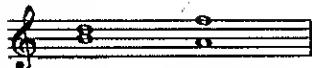
In his Rule 7, (p. 8), Cherubini states: "The false relation of the octave, and of the tritone between the parts, should be avoided; these two relations are harsh to the ear, especially that of the octave." (There follows a remark the relevant part of which I have already quoted in *Harmony*, §19.) By his incorrect and wrongheaded assumption that only the relation of the tritone itself (instead of just its situation in any given instance) alone must be the reason for the prohibition, Cherubini unfortunately finds himself compelled for the sake of consistency to prohibit any such relation at all, such as the following:

## Example 209



This idea is, admittedly, thorough and consistent, but unfortunately the presupposition lacks inner truth. Cherubini overlooks the fact that for the same reason a succession of this kind, for example:

## Example 210



would likewise have to be prohibited because of B against F (in the form of a diminished fifth); but this prohibition—fortunately, if contradictorily enough—is on the other hand not to be found in Cherubini.

*Bellermann* returns in this issue to the indifference of the early master Fux. But it almost raises the suspicion that he would tend to judge the matter exclusively from the standpoint of the Mixolydian mode when he writes on p. 149 in an exercise that he represents as Mixolydian:

## Example 211



and then explains:

In the second example of the Mixolydian mode<sup>25</sup> we see F raised to F# in the fourth bar from the end, while according to the stricter rule the sharp should be used only in the cadence itself. This exception can occasionally be permitted in the Mixolydian mode, however, when F arrives from above and then moves up again, and when B is heard directly after it in another voice. In such a case F is not only allowed but sometimes demanded even at the beginning of the setting as well [here follows the exercise whose beginning and end are cited above]; if we keep F in the second bar, the tritone (F-B) between the two voices from the second bar to the third would make a very unpleasant effect, which is called a *cross-relation*, a discordant relationship. In the course of the melody, however, only F must be used, in keeping with the mode (bar 5).

This passage clearly relates to the allegedly Mixolydian character of the exercise.

## §19. Mode of departure from the imperfect consonances

Departure from imperfect consonances is free of any prohibition; since with the departure, however, the approach to the next consonance is also determined, all of the principles set forth in §§6, 11, and 17 concerning mode of approach now take effect.

## §20. Consideration of the traditional formulation of the rules of voice-movement

To enrich the special instruction given here (in §§9-19) concerning types of voice-movement, a synopsis of the pertinent rules as they are found in other textbooks may now be presented.

Thus we read in Fux (p. 61):

*First Rule:* From one perfect consonance to another perfect consonance one must proceed in contrary or oblique motion.

*Second Rule:* From a perfect consonance to an imperfect consonance one may proceed in any of the three motions.

*Third Rule:* From an imperfect consonance to a perfect consonance one must proceed in contrary or oblique motion.

*Fourth Rule:* From one imperfect consonance to another imperfect consonance one may proceed in any of the three motions.

Here it should be noted that oblique motion is permitted in all four progressions. On the knowledge of these three types of motion and their correct use hangs, as the saying goes, the law and the prophets.

He does not discuss here, as we see, the issue of antiparallels.

According to Albrechtsberger, the rules of voice-motion run as follows (pp. 19, 21):

I. If in two chords the second pair of notes forms a perfect consonance, similar motion must be avoided in moving from the first to the second, and contrary or oblique motion must be used; the first chord may then be either perfect or imperfect. [Examples follow.]

One must also avoid two fifths or two octaves even in contrary motion, especially if the accompaniment is provided by an organ equipped with a pedal; for organists play most bass notes with the left foot, and very often turn an ascending fourth-leap into a descending fifth-leap and vice versa. As a result, parallel fifths or octaves are heard.

Since in reference to antiparallels, the prohibition of which he [in fact] creates, Albrechtsberger suddenly invokes a justification derived from free composition, we take this opportunity to respond immediately (regardless of his later amplifications) that, aside from the inadmissibility in principle of such a procedure, the issue under

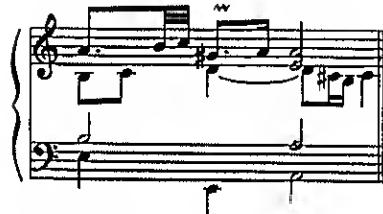
discussion also has a very different appearance in free composition. Consider, for example:

## Example 212

a) Beethoven, Piano Sonata Op. 2 No. 1, IV



b) J. S. Bach, Aria variata (BWV 989)



In the first example a, it is by no means necessary to assume an *unisono* in order to validate the parallel octaves (even if this secondary effect has to arise there of its own accord), since the tones G—G of the bass are more nearly incarnations of the scale degrees V—I than voices in the pure contrapuntal sense.<sup>26</sup> That is, we hear the same tone progression in the low register with a different purpose than in the high: in the former, scale-degree progression prevails, in the latter, nothing but melody.<sup>27</sup> If the autographs do not deceive, more complex relationships are present in the Bach example. There are either true parallel fifths from the second to the third quarter:  $\text{B}^{\text{b}} - \text{A}^{\text{b}}$ , or mere antiparallels from the first to the third quarter:  $\text{B}^{\text{b}} - \text{A}^{\text{b}}$ ; in the latter case, for the sake of clarity, the *e* of the bass would have to be thought of as a half-note (i.e., without division into quarters). However one wants to view it, as parallels or antiparallels, it is in any case the scale degrees, their expectation and fulfillment, that justify the fifths here.

[Albrechtsberger continues:]

II. If in two chords the second pair of notes forms an imperfect consonance, one may use any of the three types of motion in proceeding from the first to the second; the first chord may be perfect or imperfect [examples follow]. Since in the following four species dissonances are used as well, they are treated in this respect as imperfect consonances, and the following rule is added to the two preceding: the first chord may be perfect, imperfect, or dissonant.

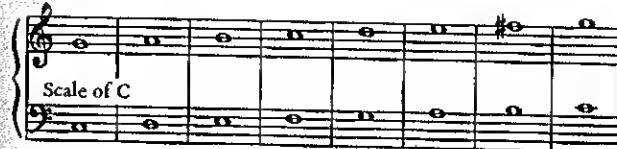
Cherubini bravely ventures deeper into the justification of the prohibition. We read on page 5, fourth rule:

Several perfect consonances of the same kind should never be permitted to succeed each other, regardless of their particular size; consequently, two fifths and two octaves in succession are prohibited. This prohibition is applicable to every kind of strict composition, in two parts, as well as in more.

There follows the explanatory "Observation":

[Observation:] A succession of octaves renders harmony well nigh void; a succession of fifths forms a discordance, because the upper part progresses in one key at the same time that the lower moves in another. For example, if to the scale of C an upper part be added which gives a perfect fifth at each bar, thus:

## Example 213



it follows that one part will be in C, the other in G. It is from this concurrence of two keys that the discordance arises, and consequently, the prohibition to introduce several fifths in succession, even when the movement of the parts, instead of being conjunct, is disjunct. The effect always remains the same. [Cherubini's Example 12 follows, which presents several fifth-successions by leap.]

It is easily discernible that Cherubini, in formulating the reasoning contained in the latter comment, was governed by an all too vague notion of what a key might be, and that in its ramifications, the reasoning therefore suffers at least from gross exaggeration. For if one might perhaps be permitted to direct it against a phenomenon like primitive organum (see above, §12) with justification, how, on the other hand, can one use it as an argument against a succession of, for example, only two fifths, whether in strict counterpoint or in free composition? Is it possible at all, then, to express by a succession of (for example) only two fifths even one key, to say nothing of two different keys operating in parallel?

Continuing the rule, Cherubini comments:

Consecutive fifths have been, and still are tolerated in contrary motion.  
... [Cherubini's example 13 follows.]

In this example it will be seen that one is a twelfth, and the other is a fifth, which alters the matter. Nevertheless, it is forbidden to use this liberty in two-voice counterpoint, particularly that of note against note. The method is tolerated only in four-voice counterpoint, where there is difficulty in making the parts flow well.

No justification whatever of the prohibition of antiparallels is given by Cherubini.

The pupil may meet with consecutive fifths in works of the galant style, as in operas, symphonies, etc.; but these are always only licenses, which are tolerated in those kinds of composition.

But how little faith Cherubini himself must have had in his own reasoning becomes

clear when he, the ever strict and merciless teacher, nevertheless condescends, after all, to "tolerate" actual fifth- and octave-parallelisms under the rubric of "licenses" in free composition! Instead of the banner of "need to tolerate"—alas! how much insecurity and bewilderment in the treatment of the subject matter are hidden in this word "tolerate"!—it would have been far more useful at this point if Cherubini had stated the reasons, whatever they might be, that would cause him to tolerate licenses in free composition.

But the fifth rule (p. 6) is still more surprising: "Approaching a perfect consonance by similar motion is prohibited, except when one of the two voices moves by a semitone." (His Example 14 follows, under the rubric "forbidden motion.") "This case," he continues, "is allowed."

#### Example 214

Ex. 15

And after giving the reason for the prohibition first established in the same rule—we are already familiar with it from Part 2, Chapter 1, §11—he adds the following concerning example 214: "The case of the tolerated movement shown in the example is different, inasmuch as, on filling up the interval-spaces with quarter-notes, there result, it is true, two fifths, but one is diminished and the other perfect." (Cherubini's Example 17 follows, which clarifies the text.) And finally:

These two fifths are tolerated because they are not of the same nature, and because the discordancy of which we have spoken as arising from perfect fifths in succession is not present. The old composers, however, always avoided this progression in two-voice counterpoint. It was only when writing for several voices that they availed themselves of it in the inner parts, to void committing some other offense.

It is perhaps unnecessary for me to state specifically that my argument in §11 (n.7, pp. 352–53) applies also to the exception set up—incidentally, quite inconsistently—by Cherubini (Example 214), and that this example, too, falls under the prohibition. Obviously Cherubini—like Albrechtsberger, incidentally, regarding the issue of two major thirds—has in this case allowed himself to be misled into positing those exceptions only by the association of Example 214 to scale-degree progression in free composition (VII—I); this is the reason for his vacillation.

Like Fux, except with a logically sound transposition of the second and third rules, Bellermann formulates the principles on p. 134f. as follows:

Rule 1. From a perfect consonance to another perfect consonance, only contrary or oblique motion may be used. [Example follows.]

Rule 2. From an imperfect to a perfect consonance, likewise, only contrary or oblique motion may be used. [Example follows.]

Rule 3. From a perfect to an imperfect consonance, all three types of motion may be used. [Example follows.]

Rule 4. From an imperfect consonance to another imperfect consonance, likewise, all three types of motion may be used. [Example follows.]

Like Fux, incidentally, he also fails to remark on the matter of antiparallels.

These rules, to touch upon this point as well, are the rules of *voice leading*, which unfortunately are taught already in harmonic theory, and, indeed, immediately in the first lessons. But I have explained in *Harmony* why they belong only in contrapuntal theory as the *ex offo*<sup>28</sup> theory of voice leading, and what harm they inflict on instruction once they are taught in an ill-conceived manner in harmony lessons.

#### Beginning

##### §21. Construction of the beginning

At the beginning, thus in the first bar, 1, 8, or 5 must be used in all cases; never other intervals, such as 3 (10) or 6.

The ranking of perfect consonances is already familiar from §4 of the present chapter; and whether preference should be given to 1 or 8 or 5 can most aptly be decided on the basis of the situation in the second bar—that is, by considering whether the unison, for example (cf. §16 above), could find a suitable continuation or not, and related matters.

Nevertheless—and this should be scrupulously observed here—when the added counterpoint is in the lower voice, the lower fifth must not be used as an alleged instance of the fifth required [by the preceding paragraph], because with it, the key would be negated. Thus in C major, an opening-formation such as the following, for example:

#### Example 215

c. f.

would point not at all to C major, but rather to F major, in which case we would certainly assume just the opposite situation of the voices, with the lower as *cantus firmus* and the upper as counterpoint.

The prohibition of imperfect consonances in the first bar of the exercise is, naturally, to be understood as only relative; that is, it derives automatically from the axiom, always to be observed in contrapuntal study, that the solution of all problems that arise is to move always in the direction from the simple and natural to the more complex and less natural (see *Introduction*, p. 000). But there is no doubt that the perfect consonances here have the significance of the more natural, especially since the purpose of the beginning can be none other than to express the tonic and its harmony (insofar as the latter is attainable at all in two-voice counterpoint) with the maximum of repose and security.

In this sense of purely contrapuntal understanding of the task of simply giving the exercise a beginning, therefore, the scale of values established above cannot be subject to any further vicissitudes of fashion in teaching: it remains immutable under all circumstances, however free composition (be it that of

the past, the present, or some future time) may proceed concerning the beginnings of compositions. Exercise and free composition are completely different things, and it is least appropriate of all to derive principles from the latter and consider them binding on the former.

The best statement of the question at hand is by *Albrechtsberger*, p. 21 under III: "The beginning and the end must have a perfect consonance, with the exception that the upper counterpoint cannot end with the fifth, and the lower counterpoint cannot begin with it." (Compare also p. 66.)

*Dehn*, by contrast, writes as follows (p. 5f.):

For these two [beginning- and ending-notes], the ancients strictly demanded a perfect consonance in the key; we shall be satisfied if beginning and end of the setting clearly define its key, and we may confidently end, for example, with the third in the upper voice, provided only that the bass note gives the root.

He then proceeds, on p. 7, actually to begin an exercise with the interval of a third. All of this is nothing but infantile mania to "modernize" counterpoint—truculence against a rule whose meaning he has completely failed to understand in the first place. Alas, this lamentable confusion of contrapuntal theory and composition-theory!

## Main Body

### §22. The preference for imperfect over perfect consonances

In the main body, more imperfect consonances should be used than perfect ones, for by dint of the harmonic characteristics of imperfect consonances described in §4 of this chapter, they appear more suitable in every case to foster mobility in the setting than the perfect consonances, which either limit the harmonic content too severely or merely repeat the tone of the *cantus firmus*.

Here, where the concern is to learn the ways and means by which such a modest organism [as the exercise] is to be created, the student's attention must be directed to the incentive for propulsion of content that operates precisely in the imperfect consonances.

On the other hand, good taste precludes that more than three thirds or sixths be placed in succession unless there is a particular reason for doing so. For even if it is certainly most convenient to write counterpoint against a voice using only thirds or sixths, in such a case the poor effect of a *monotony of intervals* cannot be avoided, and the lack of variety and contrasts in the intervals then cannot but diminish the artistic merit of the counterpoint. (Yet it is not, just for this reason, by any means necessary here to invoke the assistance of the artificial hypothesis of Riemann about the degree of blending of thirds. See above, §12 of this chapter.)

On the question of whether sixths, when several of them occur in succession, are better used descending than ascending, see Part 3, Chapter 1, §23.

*Fux* criticizes ascending motion of several sixths in succession on p. 92; see the citation in Part 3, Chapter 1, §14 concerning *Fux's Table VII, Figure 1t.*

*Albrechtsberger*, p. 24 under X: "One should not, without necessity, set more than three thirds or sixths consecutively in similar motion, because this produces the effect of a street song or popular melody." Compare also pp. 30, 32.

### §23. Use of the perfect consonances, and a few exceptions encountered therein

It goes without saying, however, that even perfect consonances may and should be used in the main body of the exercise in keeping with the principles of voice leading, so long as the otherwise applicable laws of approach and departure (§§6–20) as well as the law of more moderate usage (at least in principle) are observed.

The only exceptions are:

1. The *unison*, which is prohibited here in the first species of two-voice counterpoint simply for the reason that it would inhibit far too abruptly and drastically the flow of a setting that is so tonally impoverished in the first place by the limitations of two-voice counterpoint; and

2. The *octave*, whenever its use in the main body would suddenly produce a cadence, which—if the brevity and tonal poverty of two-voice exercises are always kept in view—would serve as a premature and misleading goal for the voice leading, and thus would have to weaken irreparably the final cadence's sense of close. But the extent to which the mere succession 6—8 is to be understood as a cadence in the purely contrapuntal sense will be shown later in §29. (Concerning the same question in three-voice counterpoint, see the discussion in Part 3, Chapter 1, §26.)

Cadences in secondary keys (see §28 of this chapter), however, are certainly permitted.

*Fux* combines the question at hand of the unison with that of the "*ottava battuta*" (10—8) on pp. 72–73, where he expressly forbids the unison in the main body (see the quotation in Part 2, Chapter 2, §12). He does not treat the cadence explicitly. [He deals with] avoidance of cadences only in his theory of fugue (p. 131).

*Albrechtsberger* treats the prohibition of the unison on p. 21 under V; on cadences he writes, on p. 22 under VIII: "Cadences, including both partial and full cadences,<sup>29</sup> are prohibited in the middle of a piece (*Stück*); a partial cadence is permitted in the last two bars at the end, for example."

#### Example 216

"poor"

The musical example shows a two-voice setting. The top voice (soprano) has notes at the 5th and 8th positions. The bottom voice (bass) has notes at the 3rd and 8th positions. The pattern repeats in a loop, failing to reach a final cadence.

## Example 217

"good"

6 8      3 1      3 8

From this it can be inferred that he applies the term "full cadence" to a cadence in which the dominant tone itself participates, while "partial cadence," on the other hand, signifies a cadence that uses only the two leading tones. Concerning the permissibility of partial cadences in three-voice counterpoint, however, see p. 81.

On p. 27 Albrechtsberger teaches—in a purely casuistic manner, to be sure, since there was no other possibility in this case—the other methods to be used when the danger of a cadence arises: ". . . not that the expected chord would always have to follow, since deceptive cadences (*Inganni*) are more beautiful and necessary before the arrival of the final cadence; for example:"

## Example 218

Cadenza      Inganni      instead of:  
 mi fa      3 6      3 3      6 6      6 8      6 3  
 3 8                                    etc.

## §24. Spacing of the two voices

The need for good sonority itself dictates moderation in the spacing of voices, thus for two-voice counterpoint, registrally adjacent voice types are preferable, such as soprano and alto, alto and tenor, or tenor and bass.

The same postulate of good sonority also stipulates that the distance between the two voices should if possible not exceed a tenth. If the voices should, on the other hand, occasionally move too close to one another, a particularly appropriate countermeasure, among others, is the leap of a sixth; such a leap can regain the contrast provided by separation and, at the same time, yield other benefits for the voice leading.

Fux writes (p. 76):

Second, if the two voices move so close together that one does not know where to take them, and if contrary motion cannot be used, such motion can be brought about by the leap of a minor sixth (which is permissible) or an octave, as in the following examples:

## Example 219

Fux III, 11

[thus:]      [thus:]

With regard to the spacing of voices, however, Fux adheres to the principle of close spacing only in the exercises of the first species; later, he violates that principle—unfortunately, to the severe detriment of his own teaching.

*Bellermann's comments* (p. 143) are excellent:

If a two-voice setting is to have a really good sound, the two voices must stand in a correct relationship to each other and must not be too widely separated. Therefore the student must, in exercises, always combine two adjacent voices—tenor with bass, alto with tenor, or alto with soprano; but not bass with alto, or (still worse) with soprano, etc. For pure intonation is difficult without instrumental accompaniment in spacings larger than the octave; besides, such spacings sound empty and poor unless they are filled out by inner voices. In two-voice counterpoint, therefore, the tenth is the widest spacing permitted.

One should, however, avoid thinking of the sonic quality of exercises in terms of a free composition, as Bellermann, in the light of the foregoing, obviously does, as a consequence of his profound misconception of [the purpose of] contrapuntal doctrine. For even in regard to sonic quality, the student must here experience for the first time only the most essential things (cf. Part I, Chapter 2, §20); the sonic quality of the setting should stand purely in the service of the exercise [and its purpose]: to provide a foundation first of all for [understanding] the nature of the singing voice and of voice leading in general.

## §25. The added voice abides by the rules of the cantus firmus

All rules and prohibitions that apply to the cantus firmus itself are to be used also in constructing the added voice. These include the rules pertaining to intervals (Part I, Chapter 2, §§5-19) and cadences (§23), those pertaining to melodic fluency in general (§20), and the prohibitions against chromatic progression, monotony, the arpeggiation of harmonic units (cf. Part I, Chapter 2, §§2, 41), and so forth. In short: the added voice, even in the exercises of strict counterpoint, should be no less melody than the cantus firmus itself!

Clearly, the requirement that the added voice constantly maintain in all respects the bearing of a melody applies to an even greater extent in free composition as well. For the infinitely greater freedom that the principal

melody is entitled to require in that domain naturally extends also to the added voice, which accordingly may demand and expect the freest approach to its formation.

**§26. Consequences of the dependency of the added voice: (a) The license of tone-repetition**

The very fact that the cantus firmus is the a priori given element, in contrast to which the added voice is merely a complement entering the scene a posteriori implies that the latter is, in turn, dependent upon the former in many respects. Consequently, as the "curse" of this dependency, the added voice is quite often forced to deviate from those very rules and norms upon which the essence of the independent cantus-firmus melody was founded.

Accordingly, the postulate of melodic fluency itself (which, as noted, is the primary requirement in the added voice just as in the cantus firmus) can, under certain circumstances, cause the added voice to violate the prohibition of tone-repetition—that is, simply to repeat a tone—in order to maintain the same pitch level purely for the sake of the melodic line.

The unison of the opening bar, incidentally, can itself necessitate a tone-repetition in the second bar, since the unison thereby is assured the eminent advantage of a departure by oblique motion (§16); for example:

**Example 220**



How many such tone-repetitions may be allowed to occur in succession, however, can be decided only by the conditions present in the given cantus firmus and the line of the added voice. Perhaps not even a threefold repetition could be called the absolutely ultimate permissible limit.

*Albrechtsberger* teaches (p. 24): "The added voice in two-voice setting may remain stationary for at most three bars (even if the meter is only two-quarters alla breve, or three-quarters or three-halves alla breve), because of the static melody." But when he moreover adds to this, "The *tasto solo* in settings of three and more voices is exempt from this rule," he unfortunately expresses in far too naive a manner an idea that is in itself indisputably correct. The reason for this naiveté, however, is that he neglected to present the necessary intermediate stages in reasoning, as they have been treated more fully in the text preceding, in §§25 and 26. I am afraid that he was unaware of them.

**§27. (b) The license of voice-crossing**

As a rule, the added voice keeps to its place through the whole course of an exercise—that is, either always above or always below the cantus firmus. Yet

under certain circumstances the demands of melodic fluency (and, occasionally, also the need to avoid a forbidden progression) can make it appear altogether desirable to cross the voices. It is obvious, however, that such an exceptional condition should by no means be continued too long and, in particular, should not ultimately lead to a complete reversal of the registers in which we perceive the two voices. Least of all should it prevail in the cadential formula itself.

*Albrechtsberger* makes the following appropriate observation (p. 32): ". . . that even more than three thirds may follow upon one another in succession if one or several of them are produced by voice-crossing."

**Example 221**



Yet at the same time we see from this example that *Albrechtsberger* unfortunately has no compunction at all about allowing voice-crossing even toward the end of the exercise.

*Bellermann*, on the other hand, rightly criticizes a similar voice-crossing at the cadence itself (p. 145):

This must always be avoided at the cadence, however, unless the cantus firmus itself has to make a larger ascending leap immediately before the cadence. Such cases are rare, however; for example:

**Example 222**



and even here the added voice can easily be led in such a way that the voices need not close in inverted position:

**Example 223**



**§28. On modulation and cross-relation**

Through the incorporation of the added voice in two-voice counterpoint, for the first time a harmony can be brought to life in the vertical direction (which,

if we disregard harmony expressed in the horizontal direction, naturally could not yet happen in the melody of the *cantus firmus* alone). And this in turn automatically enables us to incorporate modulations with relatively greater clarity than was possible in the *cantus firmus* (Part I, Chapter 2, §22).

It remains nonetheless true even in two-voice settings that a modulation must never be produced by means of a chromatic inflection;<sup>30</sup> this would give rise to either a chromatic progression on the one hand, or the effect of a mixture of modes or of a chromatic modulation on the other, depending on whether the chromatic tone were used in one and the same voice [as its diatonic counterpart], or only in the other voice. But all of these effects must, as established in Part I, Chapter 2, §4, appear inadequate and overly vague in these exercises; they are therefore prohibited.

If, accordingly, a modulation is indeed correct when it moves as shown by the Albrechtsberger excerpt cited in Example 133, it is on the contrary incorrect if it includes voice leadings such as the following:

Example 224



In such cases, at least a mixture must be assumed, if not an actual chromatic modulation.

The chromatic inflections that regularly characterize these latter situations are called (inharmonic) *cross-relations*, and therefore the limits on any freedom of modulation can perhaps be expressed most trenchantly simply by the prohibition of all cross-relation of this kind.

Thus the concept of cross-relation, to formulate the results definitively, includes only the case of chromatic progression distributed between two different voices; completely excluded from the concept is not only chromatic progression used in a single voice, but also the juxtaposition of F and B (the tritone; cf. §18 above).

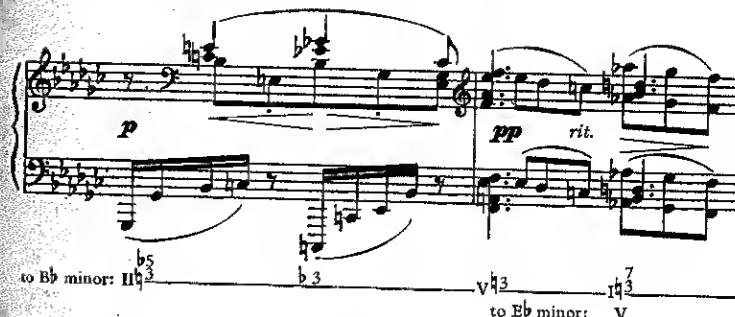
Just as free composition has urgent need of mixture and of chromatic modulation, however, the cross-relation that derives from them becomes in like measure not merely a "tolerated license" but a fully justified necessity.

Many examples that incidentally happen to illustrate cross-relation appeared already in *Harmony*; these include the following (all from *Harmony*): Example 72, fourth bar, third and fourth quarters; same example, sixth bar, second and third quarters; Example 79, first and second (!) bars, and later fifth and sixth (!) bars; Example 84, third and fourth (!) bars; and so on.

Accordingly, I can limit myself here to a single example:

Example 225

Brahms, Intermezzo Op. 117 No. 1



The first bar of this example exhibits a cross relation by reason of a chromatic tonicization-process which is made to turn back on itself: the  $e^1$  of the melodic line itself ( $e^1 - g^b - c^1$ ), as an initially chromatically raised third of II in  $B\flat$  minor, juxtaposed with the diatonic third  $E\flat$  (incidentally appearing in three octaves) of the same scale degree. (Concerning the resulting interval of a diminished third  $e^1 - g^b$  in the melody, compare Part I, Chapter 2, §81)

As a product of the chromatic modulation that occurs in the second bar of the example, the tones A (as third of V in  $B\flat$  minor) and  $A\flat$  (as seventh of V in  $E\flat$  minor) are juxtaposed in the manner of a cross-relation.

Chapter IV (p. 7) in *Albrechtsberger*, entitled "Von den musikalischen Geschlechtern und Tonarten," treats modulation among other things; as a result of misunderstanding, however, it deals only with modulation in free composition (symphony, concerto, quartet, quintet, psalm, choral work), so the opinions set forth there can claim no real significance for direct application to contrapuntal study. (It should not be overlooked that Albrechtsberger regards counterpoint as part of an actual "introduction to composition"!) Compare on the other hand the statement by Albrechtsberger quoted in §22 of Part I, which pertains directly to modulation in the exercises of counterpoint.

*Cherubini* also exceeds the limits set by the most fundamental tasks of contrapuntal theory; he writes (p. 11):

In no piece should one modulate to keys other than those contained in the scale [of the main key]. In C major, one can modulate to no keys other than C major, A minor, F major, and D minor, and in the latter modulation[s], one must take particular care to touch upon the [key of] F only in passing, because the  $B\flat$  which it contains completely obliterates the idea of the principal key (whose leading tone is B), just as the  $C^{\#}$  (the leading tone of D minor) directly contradicts the principal key. One can also modulate to E minor, but this key, because of the  $F^{\#}$  and  $D^{\#}$ , must be of even shorter duration than the modulations mentioned above. The key of B is completely forbidden, since its fifth must be raised. In A minor, one can modulate to C major and, in passing, touch upon the keys of F major and D minor; the key of E minor can also appear, but B major is completely prohibited, just as in C major.

All of these modulations are natural and analogous to the principal key. Practice and reflection provide the means to use them appropriately and with good effect, and to shape them so as to form a beautiful whole.

So far Cherubini. In a *Kompositionslehre* all of this would perhaps be appropriate; in contrapuntal theory, on the other hand, it is appropriate only to the extent that it is not put forward as instruction directly applicable to the teaching of counterpoint, but is intended merely as an excursion into the realm of free composition.

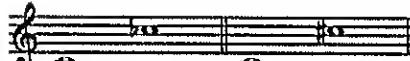
Another severe flaw in Cherubini's treatment is that he fails to recognize all cross-relations as what they really are—specifically, modulation by means of mixture or chromatic inflection. Instead, he regards cross-relation as simply a *relation* to be conceived in an absolute sense and at the same time to be condemned in an absolute sense. We read on p. 8, under "Remarks on the Seventh Rule":

Relation signifies the immediate affinity that exists between two sounds, successive or simultaneous. This affinity is considered according to the nature of the interval formed by the two sounds, so that the relation shall be true when the interval is true; it is false if the interval is diminished or augmented. False relations in harmony are considered to be those in which the two sounds do not belong to one and the same key. The diminished or augmented octave is a false relation in melody as in harmony, however it may be used. The disagreeable effect it produces may be mitigated, but not entirely eliminated. The use of this interval is, therefore, absolutely prohibited [in melody].

#### Example 226

Ex. 19

false relation of the diminished and the augmented octave



In harmony, such octaves are completely unusable, especially in proliferation.

#### Example 227

Ex. 20



There are, however, more recent composers who allow themselves the following usages:

#### Example 228

Ex. 21



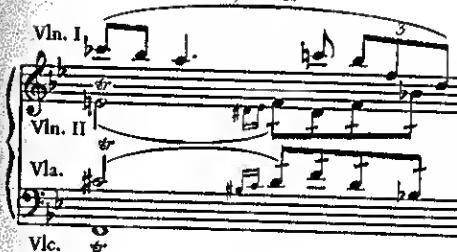
They regard the C $\flat$  and C $\sharp$  as merely transient alterations, and as notes which, since the fall on the weak beat, have only little value. That, however, is again a gross license, which, scarcely tolerable in a completely free style, must be absolutely excluded in the strict style.

Such an agglomeration of serious mistakes by Cherubini! Simply because the exercises of strict counterpoint must altogether reject mixture, chromatic modulation, and diminished and augmented octaves—it would have been up to Cherubini to state the very reason for these prohibitions!—must free composition, in turn, also forgo them for that reason? Why? Just for the sake of consistency? Is it not still more consistent if free composition, which is just as entitled to use dissonant passing tones as strict counterpoint, motivates, under the same rubric [of passing tone], also chromatic progressions—to which free composition has indeed inherited a new, independent right (cf. Part 1, Chapter 2, §4)? (Compare Examples 30, 31, etc.)

And why, then—to respond to Cherubini's Example 20 [Example 227 of the present text]—when so many new motivations enter the picture, should Wagner, for example, hesitate to write the following:

#### Example 229

Wagner, *Tristan und Isolde*, Act II



Would it not on the contrary have to be criticized as inconsistency if Wagner, with all of the reasons he had to write as he did in this passage, nevertheless had forgone the way of writing—that is, if he had avoided it even in free composition just for the sake of strict counterpoint, which can by no means marshal such reasons in its exercises? (Compare also *Harmony*, §53ff.)

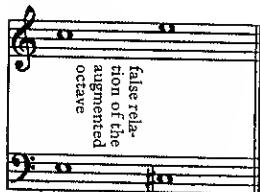
Finally, it should be remembered that Cherubini unfortunately includes among cross-relations the tritone, which is addressed more fully in the comments to §18 of the present chapter.

But let us read further:

There is yet another situation in which one can arrive at a false relation in the harmony between two different chords; for example:

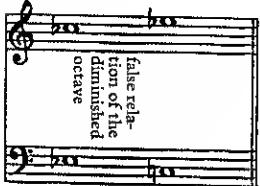
## Example 230

Ex. 22



## Example 231

Ex. 23



The tone C in the upper voice of the first chord of the first example sounds bad in relation to the C $\sharp$  of the lower voice in the second chord; that is indisputable for every trained ear, and it is easily proven for the intellect by the fact that these two tones belong to completely different chords, which stand in no close relationship to each other, and that they cannot be placed in such direct succession without striking the ear as unpleasant.

There is, however, a simple method of eliminating this difficulty—namely, by inserting another note, so that the voice which (in the above illustration, for example) has sung C itself introduces C $\sharp$  in advance, or causes the impression of C to disappear by means of such an inserted note, for example:

## Example 232

Ex. 24



Through this and other palliatives, the unpleasant impression of false relations can be weakened and the ear made accustomed to them, because the impression then is not so immediate; in the strict style, however, such cases should always be avoided.

How little the utilitarian value of all this in free composition, and how superfluous

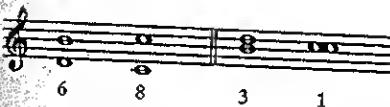
and misleading in strict counterpoint! It is certainly correct, as Cherubini stresses, that C and C $\sharp$ , for example, "belong to completely different chords, which stand in no close relationship to each other," but it surely is no less correct that along with modulation through re-valuation or enharmonic change, free composition is for many reasons often forced to use modulation through chromaticism; the content of the latter, however, is provided only by the cross-relating octaves and similar phenomena under discussion here! [Fr.C., §§248-250.]

## Cadence

## §29. Construction of the cadence

Like the *cantus firmus*, the melody of the added voice (cf. §25 above) must in turn use for the purpose of its own cadence nothing but one of the two leading tones. This automatically implies that only one of the following formulas must be used:

## Example 233



These formulas are necessary if parallel octaves or unisons are not to arise from the possible use of the same leading tone in both the *cantus firmus* and the added voice.

For the above cadential formulas, which have heretofore been called "partial cadence," I prefer the term *contrapuntal cadences*, in view of the fact that they have taken on this form only under the influence of *contrapuntal* voice leading itself, and, indeed, that of the interval of the second, which might be called the primary ingredient of melodic fluency.

Another form of cadence, however, such as the following:

## Example 234

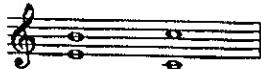


dispenses with the leading tone in the lower voice, substituting the interval of a fifth instead. If on the one hand it thus offends against the contrapuntal postulate of the leading tone as the inevitable penultimate tone of the melody, on the other hand it betrays all too clearly the traces of a purely harmonic origin, the scale-degree progression V—I. Precisely for this reason, however, in contrast to the contrapuntal cadences introduced here for the first time, the cadence of Example 234 may be called the *harmonic cadence*, a designation

that gives far better orientation concerning its essence than the formerly common nomenclature "full cadence." The harmonic cadence is therefore to be strictly banned from two-voice counterpoint, and should not be admitted before the study of three-voice counterpoint is taken up. Even there, it should be used only when the two leading tones are otherwise present in the cadence and thus pay proper tribute to the spirit of voice leading: such is the immutable adherence of counterpoint—indeed, without exception in the realm of its exercises—to the purely contrapuntal law of the leading tones, a law that counterpoint never sacrifices!

From the above arguments, finally, it can be inferred that a succession such as the following:

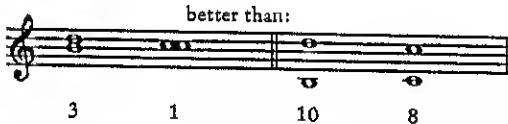
Example 235



can be called neither a contrapuntal nor a harmonic cadence: even the involvement of the one leading tone in the upper voice is insufficient, as can be seen, to allow this interval succession to be subsumed under the concept of cadence at all.

From the tendency to maintain constantly in exercises above all the vocal foundation, it follows that the cadential form 3—1 is incontrovertibly preferable to the form 10—8:

Example 236



And it must not be overlooked that a closer relationship between the voices is always more suitable to the character of a cadence as such than the more distant relationship of tenth and octave.

However, those who attend less closely to the spacing of voices may, in any case, also employ the form 10—8.

Regarding *Albrechtsberger*, compare the quotation in §23 of the present chapter. In his exercises, he freely uses the formulation 10—8 along with the others.

*Bellermann* states (p. 145):

The cadence involving a tenth and an octave is not good and should be avoided in the exercises, since one should take care especially at the cadence that the voices stand in a pleasing relationship to each other, and that the tenth, as the maximum distance between two voices, be used only in passing in the main body of an exercise.

## Exercises

Example 237

Fux II, 3 and 11, 4 (allegedly Dorian)

Soprano

1

2

Fux II, 11 and II, 12 (allegedly Lydian)

Alto

3

4

Fux II, 13 (allegedly Mixolydian)

Soprano

5

Albrechtsberger, p. 30

Soprano (c. f.)

6

Example 237 *continued*

Albrechtsberger, p. 32

Soprano

7.

8.

H. Schenker  
Soprano

9.

10.

H. Schenker (c. f. by Fux)  
Soprano

11.

12.

substituting sixths or the like in a forced manner. Bars 5 and 6, and likewise bars 8 and 9, pay no heed to "B contra F" (cf. §18 of the present chapter).

No. 2. Beautiful, especially successful mixture of perfect (bars 3, 8) and imperfect consonances.

No. 3. In bars 3-4 and 9-10, the parallelism of [interval] succession protrudes almost with the impression of monotony in the broader sense (cf. Part 1, Chapter 2, §21); by use of the interval 6 in bar 3, this fault as well could perhaps have been avoided without causing still greater damage.

The progression 3 — 8 in the same bars, however, is not a cadence (cf. Part 2, §§23 and 29).

No. 4. The descent below the tonic by the cantus firmus in bars 5-7 (allegedly; Hypolydian model) causes Fux to use voice-crossing for the duration of no fewer than four bars. The exercise includes only imperfect consonances, but these nevertheless occur in appropriate alternation and in beautiful mixture.

No. 5. Observe here the tone-repetitions over the span of three bars (bars 4-6).

No. 6. The tenths in the final bars here make an unpleasant effect.

No. 7. The construction of the counterpoint suffers under the unfavorable structure of the cantus firmus itself. In the last four bars, Albrechtsberger oversteps the basic precepts of strict counterpoint by causing the leap of a sixth to be followed by that of a diminished fourth (cf. Part 1, Chapter 2, §9), when he could have simply allowed the tone B in the third bar from the end to be repeated, and thus have moved to the leading tone by the leap of a third (cf. Part 1, Chapter 2, §23).

## Comments on the Preceding Exercises

No. 1. Fux uses fifths in bars 4 and 7, since they came about so naturally through contrary motion in the fluent line of the melody; under such favorable linear circumstances as he achieved here, he preferred not to avoid the fifths perhaps by

## Chapter 2

# The Second Species: Two Notes Against One

### General Aspects

#### §1. Downbeat and upbeat

This species teaches how two notes in the counterpoint (specifically two half-notes) may be set against one note of the *cantus firmus*.

This automatically necessitates for the first time a discrimination of two distinct beats.

The first is called the *downbeat*, the second the *upbeat*. This nomenclature is derived from the act of beating time, in which the first beat, called strong, is indicated by a downward motion of the hand or baton, and the second beat, called weak, by a rising motion. From this point of view, it is certainly better to translate the old term "thesis" as "downbeat" and "arsis" as "upbeat" rather than vice versa.

Fux writes (p. 74):

Before I begin to explain this species of counterpoint, it must be known that now we are dealing with a twofold temporal organization, in which the measure or bar consists of two equal parts; the first of these corresponds to downward motion of the hand, and the other to upward motion. The downward motion is called *thesis* in Greek, the upward motion *arsis*; we will use these two words in this study.

Bellermann (p. 150) uses the terminology *arsis* and *thesis* in the opposite sense; for his reasons, see Bellermann, p. 2 (footnote).

#### §2. The dissonance on the upbeat

From what was said in Chapter 1 about the requirement of consonance in strict counterpoint, it is obvious that the downbeat must be consonant. This postulate continues to be satisfied, it is true, if the upbeat too is consonant. But the latter can also, under certain circumstances, present a dissonance against the *cantus firmus*.

#### §3. (a) The requirement of stepwise motion to the dissonance

If the dissonance is placed on the upbeat arbitrarily and without any constraint, as at a and b:

##### Example 238



it can easily happen that a relationship of a harmonic nature will be heard between the dissonance and the two tones set at the following downbeat (those of the *cantus firmus* and the counterpoint)—a relationship (known in free composition as *anticipation*) which injects into strict counterpoint a thoroughly unwelcome entity of a melodic-harmonic nature.

Or, as at c, it is enigmatically made clear to the ear that, given the tone C in the *cantus firmus*, the path to G in the counterpoint would have moved far more naturally through E than through F:

##### Example 239



In this latter case, it is also the two-voice texture that fails—and within the scope of an exercise must fail—to explain why instead of the natural path just the more individual (that is, the less natural) was taken.

If strict counterpoint, as has repeatedly been emphasized, must avoid dubious unified configurations and always prefer the natural to the artificial, then obviously it goes against the grain of counterpoint, at least within the sphere of its own interests, to permit a dissonance-tactic that leads to effects like a, b, and c. In seeking a solution to the problem—that is, in seeking devices that could counteract the danger of an anticipation or of a too differentiated, thus too individual turn of the melodic line—strict counterpoint found the most suitable device to be the *horizontal interval of the second*, which at the same time can represent, in the vertical-harmonic direction, dissonances other than the second as well:

##### Example 240



The second used in this way (cf. Part I, Chapter 2, §16) establishes truly complete neutrality from tone to tone, in that it contributes just as little of harmony to the tone that follows as to the one that precedes. For since it relates to both just as a dissonance, it cannot possibly maintain a harmonic relationship to even one of the surrounding tones. And finally, along with this, the second provides an especially happy fulfillment of the postulate of melodic fluency. What better solution could be found?

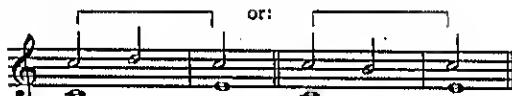
Thus it came to pass that long ago, in consideration of the attendant benefits for both harmonic neutrality and melodic fluency, the basic principle was established: *the dissonance on the upbeat may be introduced only by step*.

To leap either into or away from the dissonance on the upbeat is therefore—to formulate this law also in widely used schoolbook terminology—not permitted under any circumstances.

#### §4. (b) About the direction of the stepwise motion

To judge only on the basis of the foregoing considerations, however, it would certainly be only consistent to approve also the following solution to our problem:

Example 241



since here, just as in Example 240, the dissonance on the upbeat still appears only in passing. But the two consonant tones surrounding the dissonances are identical; this unfortunately has the obvious disadvantage that all three tones enter into a higher-level melodic unit, in that here the one tone C of the counterpoint appears as though melodically unfolded. If this effect is to be suppressed in the interest of the balance requisite for counterpoint, then one must, as follows *e contrario* from the preceding, simply avoid returning to the same tone, while otherwise adhering strictly to the principle of the passing tone. Or in other words: *The dissonance introduced by step on the upbeat must also continue in the direction by which it entered*.

#### §5. (c) The phenomena of the passing second and the neighboring note

The problem of the dissonance on the upbeat thus leads finally to the following graduated set of solutions:

1. The first and most natural solution, which at the same time precludes all error, is that which demands of the passing tone a continuation in the same direction.

In this case the dissonance is called a *passing second*.

2. Less natural, because bound to a consequence undesirable in strict counterpoint and thus of second rank, is the solution that permits a return to the same consonant tone at the downbeat of the next bar.

The dissonant second appearing in this case between the two identical consonant tones is called *neighboring note*.

3. By contrast, all other solutions, which approach or leave the dissonance by leap (and there are infinitely many of these), must be considered completely unsuited for strict counterpoint—that is, for exercises. They are instead reserved only for free composition, which alone (in contrast to strict counterpoint), in direct proportion to the compositional disposition, can elicit and validate the psychological reasons for any more individual kind of solution.

It must not be forgotten, however, that the neighboring note offers an important advantage to the setting, specifically that of the interval of a second. For precisely because of this, it is often possible to use a second, so beneficial to melodic fluency, even in situations in which otherwise (because dissonance cannot be used in the form of a true passing tone) it would perhaps be necessary to leap. If the neighboring note shares with the passing second the advantage of the second, the two nevertheless differ significantly in that with the former, one note of the melody turns as though upon its own axis, as we can see more clearly from the following example of free composition than from an exercise of strict counterpoint:

Example 242

F. Couperin, Pièces de Clavecin: *Troisième Ordre (La favorite, chaconne à deux tems)*, ed. by J. Brahms and F. Chrysander



In the light of the preceding, it is easy to differentiate the passing second and the neighboring note from the so-called *Wechselnote* or accented passing tone (see *Harmony*, §167),<sup>1</sup> which has its place only in free composition. It, too, like the first two types, represents a dissonance enclosed between two consonances, except that it occurs on the downbeat instead of the upbeat:

## Example 243

passing second      neighboring note      accented passing tone

The scale of values of weak-beat dissonances established above is completely independent of time and fashion; it is therefore idle and childish to cite—just on the pretext of trying to write a “modern” theory of counterpoint—inclusion of the neighboring note as alleged evidence of an advanced point of view. The effects depicted in the above scale remain the same through all eternity, and are ranked only among themselves! And exactly at the cost of sacrificing the distinction, one can adopt sometimes a stricter standpoint (which excludes the neighboring note), sometimes a less strict (which includes it); but the possibility of such a choice merely emphasizes the differentiation inherent in the problem, never any kind of “modernization” of it.

Unfortunately all previous treatises have neglected to provide a foundation for the principle of the passing second. Thus [often] a perfectly correct solution of the dissonance-problem that arises just here for the first time (admittedly, it is only one of several solutions) is worked out in a completely preemptive tone, as a panacea. It is obvious that the student is ill served by such instruction; but the teacher is also at a disadvantage in that he himself does not have a thorough understanding of the rule he adopts and teaches. For when the time comes to decide whether the neighboring note or, finally, a still more remote solution like the accented passing tone should be permitted in exercises, he simply lacks the security of any guiding principle. According to the above account, each solution with its own particular effect is clearly circumscribed; and as I have said before, all that remains for the teacher is to decide at the outset, in full consciousness and free of any individual whim, to favor either the strictest or a less strict position. Let each teacher and each student decide the matter as he wishes—so long as he understands just which side he is taking.

Fux disposes of the problem, without providing further justification, as follows (p. 74):

In this species no dissonance may occur, except by filling the space between two notes a third apart, e.g.:

## Example 244

Fux II, 21      *diminutio*

It makes no difference whether the filling note is consonant or dissonant; it is satisfactory if the space between the two notes a third apart is filled out.

It is clear that this definition of the dissonance permitted here applies only to a passing dissonance moving in a single direction, and consequently excludes any form of neighboring note. In fact, Fux avoids the neighboring note in his exercises as well, and dissonances only in the strictest form of the stepwise passing tone. Thus the following voice leading, in Table IV, Figure 1 (admittedly an isolated case), is all the more striking:

## Example 245

Alto

c. f.

As can be seen, a seventh is taken by *leap* at the upbeat.<sup>2</sup> If one respects the principle of consonance, and understands that such voice leading [as in the above example] belongs only in the realm of free composition, which from the outset is co-determined by purely harmonic concepts, then one can in no way excuse Fux just because of the truly severe difficulty in which he found himself. There is no question that the tenor in the second bar had to reach D by contrary motion if similar motion to a fifth were to be avoided; on the other hand, the tenor voice as such (cf. Part 1, Chapter 2, §2) could not drop below C. So what could be done? Obviously the voice leading would have had to take a different course much earlier if such an irregularity were to be avoided at the end.

Albrechtsberger, probably only obsessed with pursuit of a falsely understood modernity, permits not only the passing dissonance at the upbeat but also the neighboring note, and, significantly, without discriminating between upper and lower. After setting forth the rule of the passing dissonance—unfortunately without providing justification—he adds (p. 35): “It is also permitted to enclose dissonances (including augmented and diminished ones) between two occurrences of the same tone, [both of] which must, however, be consonances . . .” (examples follow); but he makes no references here to the differences of effect. In fact, Albrechtsberger freely uses neighboring notes as well as passing tones in his exercises, as if use of the former in contrapuntal settings had exactly the same effect as that of the strict passing dissonance. Such a practice, however, which ignores actually present distinctions as though they simply did not exist, makes ear and judgment ever dumber; for the ear neglects to discriminate properly among effects that are in themselves differentiated, whereby a blurring sameness in goal and execution necessarily arises in the exercises.

Still more freely than Albrechtsberger—and for that very reason farther removed from the true goal of contrapuntal instruction—, Cherubini teaches on p. 12 in his rule X:

The strong beat must have a consonance. There are particularly difficult cases in which a dissonance can also be placed on the strong beat, but they occur

seldom, and then only when it is not otherwise possible to avoid faults of a different kind, such as those that cause an excessively disjunct melody and the like. The weak beat can bear either a consonance or a dissonance, provided that the latter stands between two consonances and the melody that it forms is fluent. Such a dissonance is called *passing*.

In this rule, then, passing dissonance, neighboring note, and even accented passing tone lie side by side, and no further discrimination or justification indicates how different these concepts are! But this much is clear in any case: Cherubini's textual presentation includes the neighboring note, and he thus proceeds to use it freely in the exercises. But the most astonishing thing in his discussion is the inclusion of even the accented passing tone in the exercises of strict counterpoint. Compare his example 48:

Example 246



Whoever cannot believe that this is nothing but a lamentable, serious misunderstanding on Cherubini's part concerning the purpose of contrapuntal doctrine need only read the following remark of his, which concerns the example cited above:

I could have proceeded differently, but by placing the dissonance on the strong beat I achieve a more graceful and pleasant melody, and that is sufficient reason to justify nonobservance of the rule. During the course of his studies, the student will find many other cases in which he will want to take advantage of this procedure. Incidentally, one can learn from this example how the counterpoint must be constructed in conformity with the strictest rules of art if it is to conjoin both pleasant melody and the style uniquely appropriate to this genre of composition.

The contrapuntal exercise, with its modest resources, is supposed to inform the ear for the first time about the manifold phenomena of the tonal world—for example, in this case, about passing dissonance, neighboring note, and accented passing tone. Now if we insist on immediately infusing it with what is called "style"; in other words, if we represent the exercises as actual examples of a particular compositional genre and, citing necessities inherent in that genre, attempt to justify the violation of "rules" in them; in short, if we write actual *compositions* where we should instead learn to differentiate effects within the realm of an exercise constructed expressly for that purpose, then the hodgepodge of concepts and principles undoubtedly reaches its apex. And yet, I almost suspect that Cherubini's aberration, like that of Albrechtsberger, is again only the result of an unfortunate delusion of modernism, which, as we have already seen and will see often again, prevents the theorist from grasping what alone should be taught as the true task of counterpoint.

Bellermann (see pp. 150–151) was the first to return to the strictness of Fux in its entirety, in keeping with his preference for transmitting the latter's teaching. He requires the dissonance to progress by step in the same direction, and explicitly excludes the neighboring note with the following words:

Note well that this can be done only as indicated here, and that the *passing dissonance* is not to be confused with the *neighboring note*. The latter term likewise signifies a dissonance on the weak beat; however, this dissonance does not move ahead in the same direction, but returns to the first tone or sometimes progresses by a foreign interval,<sup>3</sup> such as:

Example 247



The composers of the sixteenth century knew this type of dissonance as well, to be sure, but they used it only in quicker note-values—quarters and eighths—and even then only rarely.

Leaving aside the fact that Bellermann, like his predecessors, fails to provide any foundation for the most basic rule of the passing second, he commits, besides, the error of introducing disorder into the concept of the neighboring note in that he confuses it in the second and third examples, with the anticipation. Bellermann's reference to the compositional practice of the sixteenth century would have to be considered admirable if, along with it, he could have seen his way clear to remark that the effects of neighboring note and anticipation certainly have been sought out in composition for a very long time (for this is true, and must be mentioned even in contrapuntal theory); unfortunately we must conclude from his closing phrase that he sees in these dissonances, even if they could really be sufficiently motivated on a given occasion by affect or other technical grounds, fundamentally only a license, an infraction of the rule; and apparently all that can comfort and reassure him about this infraction is the observation that it occurred "only in quicker note-values . . . and even then only rarely." Bellermann simply overlooks that even in the free composition of the sixteenth century in general, only little opportunity and equally little necessity for those dissonances existed; and therefore it is completely improper in principle to approve Bellermann's thought process and doctrine, even though in other respects one must concur with his position on the neighboring note.

### §6. The psychological significance of the passing dissonance

If consonance between two voices expresses most exactly their will to belong together, so to speak—the commitment to unity—in the dissonance, conversely, we can find the mark of an independence, albeit only transient, of the one voice in relation to the other.

If, however, as in this case, the dissonance remains bound for the time being to the rather strict specification that it must flow back into a consonance, and therefore can count only as a path, or a bridge from the one consonance to the other, there is still no danger whatever that such a dissonance might destroy the unity of the two voices. Rather, the transient

independence increases the value and power of the unity of the two, a unity that was intended from the beginning and is indeed once again asserted. Exactly in this situation we are provided a beautiful, deep insight into free composition, which strives similarly to abstract the unity of its "scale degrees" (see *Harmony*, §§82ff.) from the independence of *many* voices. The aesthetic effect of this unity will be the more complete the more richly the independence of the individual voices is constructed.

Here in two-voice counterpoint, however, where the *dissonance* is introduced *for the first time*, one should first learn to grasp its initial function, and the prerequisites of that function. And one should not forget that, however modestly the problem of dissonance here presents itself, in this beginning, nevertheless, we greet the wellspring of countless beauties in free composition.

The basic moral of this problem, however, like that of the permissible intervals in the first species (cf. Part 2, Chapter 1, §2), accordingly runs as follows:

*In the beginning is consonance*, that is, agreement!

Only after a consonance follows the antithesis, the dissonance, and ultimately agreement has the last word!

Thus dissonance, here as well, absolutely presupposes consonance.

Consonance precedes, and only through its contrast with consonance does the dissonance set itself off clearly!

As far as free composition is concerned, it emancipates the passing dissonance from the postulate of the second, so that it is possible, as an extension of the concept, to regard as passing dissonance even a dissonant note that leaps between two points of a given definite harmony.

The construction, permitted and sought in free composition, of varied harmonic entities leaves no doubt about the character of such passing tones, no matter what kind of leap they execute.

Compare, for example:

Example 248

J. S. Bach, English Suite J. S. Bach, Organ Prelude and Fugue in C Minor  
No. 6 (BMV 546)



Free composition solves in particular the problem of the passing dissonance within the space of a *fourth* (in other words: not just within the space of a *third*, as strict composition does)—indeed, in such a way that each of the

two intermediate tones is equally entitled to function as passing tone. For example:

Example 249



How special the effect, in particular, when, within the space of a fourth that contains the leading tone of the key, that very leading tone is omitted and replaced by another passing tone.<sup>4</sup>

Example 250

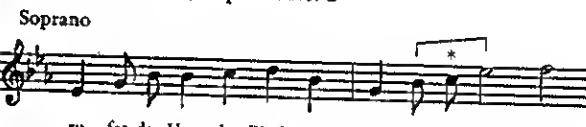
Brahms, *Ein deutsches Requiem*, IV



Or:

Example 251

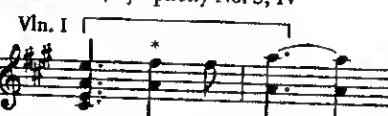
Brahms, "Nachtwache," Op. 104 No. 2



Or:

Example 252

Mendelssohn, Symphony No. 3, IV



See for comparison, on the other hand, an especially interesting example showing the use of the leading tone within the space of a fourth in *Harmony*, example 241, bar 5, left hand, first quarter-note; observe there the circumstances in which the leading tone *d*<sup>1</sup> itself appears in passing between the tones *bb* and *eb*.<sup>5</sup>

In free composition, the passing tone can even move in a *direction different* from that of the two harmonic tones, for example:

## Example 253

J. S. Bach, Twelve Little Preludes, No. 12

On this occasion we may recall that in early music—see J.S. Bach's Suites, Handel's keyboard works—the passing tones (even accented ones) were sometimes not written out at all but only notated with a sign like this:  (compare *Harmony*, Example 271<sup>6</sup>).

The innocent but charming passage shown in Example 254 illustrates the highly delicate and fascinating effects that can be achieved by providing

## Example 254

Schubert, Deutsche Tänze, Op. 33 No. 11

h = harmonic tone  
p = passing

just the passing tone with a *longer duration* than the harmonic tone to which it resolves. In spite of many other secondary effects that catch our ear, the above example really has to be understood this way:

## Example 255

Free composition, furthermore, makes it possible also to *interrupt* the passing motion. In the following example:

## The Second Species: Two Notes Against One

## Example 256

Handel, Suite in E Major

we find that the passing motion  $d^{\#}2 - e^2$  in the soprano is even interrupted by another tone, so that the tone  $d^{\#}2$  almost assumes the effect of a neighboring note temporarily, at least until the appearance of  $e^1$ .

Several other examples of interrupted passing motion may be cited here:

## Example 257

R. Strauss, *Till Eulenspiegel's lustige Streiche*

## a) Violin I

## b)

The possibility of replacing smaller intervals also with *larger leaps* (cf. part 1, Chapter 2, §17) leads in free composition to a passing motion such as that in the next example, where a ninth is used instead of a second.

## Example 258

Brahms, Piano Trio Op. 8, I

The abbreviation common in free composition of two or more tonal processes—usually called ellipsis—leads, when applied to the passing motion, to the following phenomena:

## Example 259

R. Strauss, *Till Eulenspiegel's lustige Streiche*

We perceive the  $g\#^1$  as coming from an implied  $g^1$  that was omitted by ellipsis:  $(g^1) - g\#^1 - a^1$ .<sup>7</sup> Such occurrences may very well be called *elliptical* or directly superimposed passing tones (cf. *Harmony*, example 264).

I mentioned already in *Harmony*, §164, that free composition, furthermore, has the power of suddenly changing, if necessary, the character of dissonant passing tones that first appear as simple passing tones. Therefore, the portamento based on *anticipation* (cf. Part I, Chapter 2, §17) in many cases is nothing but a second which originally has the effect of a passing note. Compare with Examples 116 and 117 in the cited paragraph also the following illustration:

## Example 260

Schubert, "Der Kreuzzug"



The first eighth-note of the uppermost voice is an appoggiatura to  $f\#^1$ .

The second eighth-note is the harmonic tone, the fundamental of the chord itself, which appears here in inversion as a  $\beta$ -chord.

The third eighth-note brings once again the same tone  $f\#^1$ ; our perception subsequently interprets the tones in retrospect in an entirely different way, as here:

## Example 261

suspension-resolution

initially:	subsequently:
a)	
susp. res.	susp. antic. res.

and understands the second eighth-note only as portamento anticipation of the third eighth-note, as shown at b.

The fourth eighth-note is another second-step; thus, the question arises whether this step is only a passing motion or something else.

The fifth eighth-note provides an answer; since it is itself an appoggiatura, the preceding eighth-note appears to us in reality again only as an anticipation—that is, a portamento.

The sixth and seventh eighth-notes show again the same situation as the second and third.

Observe at the eighth eighth-note the tie, the sign of the keyboard-portamento (cf. §17 of Chapter 2, just cited).

The following exhibit, finally, shows the assemblage of effects so delicately intermixed by the succession of eighth-notes:

## Example 262

In this context one should also study the fluctuation of such passing tones especially in the aria<sup>8</sup> from Beethoven's Piano Sonata op. 110.

This category encompasses also anticipations—most of them even involving steps of a second, and thus having the initial appearance of a passing tone—as Liszt writes them:

## Example 263

Liszt, *Rhapsodie hongroise* No. 12

(observe especially the legato applied to the whole melody!) and, in Liszt's tradition, also Richard Strauss, for example:

## Example 264

R. Strauss, *Till Eulenspiegel's lustige Streiche*

(observe in the first violin the original sign of a genuine violin portamento between  $d^3$  and  $c^2$ ).

By presenting also *complete chords* only in passing, incidentally, free composition gives the concept of the passing dissonance its maximum expansion. [See Part 6, first section, especially §§7, 10.]

As far as the neighboring note is concerned, even strict counterpoint, as we shall see in Chapter 5, uses both neighboring notes, the upper and the lower, in direct succession; this occurs at first, however, only as a means of resolving suspensions, whereby the first neighboring note is [actually] not so much a neighboring note as, rather, the dissonant suspension itself. Aside from suspension-resolutions, free composition creates, from the intent and possibility of forming larger melodic units, a great number of reasons to provide the principal tone with both of its neighboring notes (that is, the upper and lower seconds). The order within these groupings can take various forms, as illustrated in the following discussion.

We saw already in Example 77 how both neighboring notes occurred between the principal tones in the following order:

1            2            3            4  
Main Tone—Upper Neighbor—Lower Neighbor—Main Tone

In the following example we see an even larger melodic unit:

Example 265

Handel, Suites de pièces, 2nd collection, No. 1, Air with Variations, Var. IV



which contains, in addition to the two neighboring notes of the principal tone  $c^2$ , also the harmonic tone  $a^1$ .

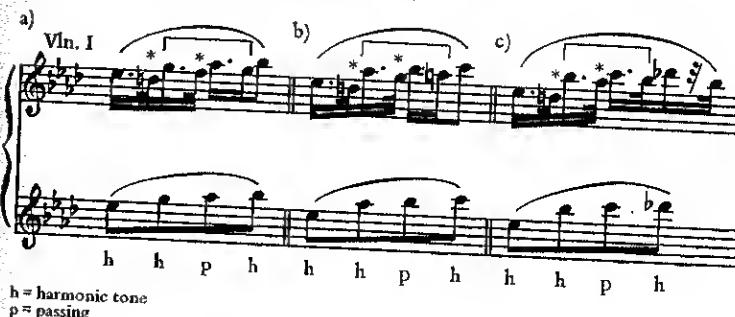
1            2            3            4            5  
Main Tone—Upper Neighbor—Lower Third—Lower Neighbor—Main Tone

And how ingenious Mozart is in constructing the neighboring notes in the following figures:

The Second Species: Two Notes Against One

Example 266

Mozart, Symphony No. 39, Andante, b. 10ff.



The first neighbor  $d^2$  (at the asterisk at a) at first implies the return of the principal tone  $e\flat^2$ , but instead another harmonic tone,  $g^2$ , occurs (compare the previous example). In addition, the ear hears the bracketed passages as independent melodic units, as though, for example, the tone  $g^2$  at a were the principal tone followed by its neighbors  $f^2$  and  $a\flat^2$ , while the latter tone  $a\flat^2$ , independently of its neighboring-note character, expresses by virtue of the continuation a passing-tone quality even more strongly. (The effect of the figures cited here is especially interesting, because they appear in a later passage, bars 40ff. in the bass.)

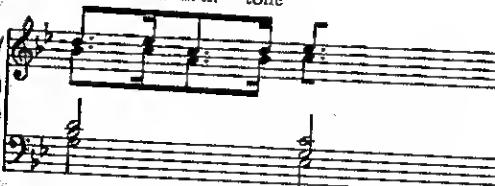
That the neighboring note in free composition can occur simultaneously in two or more voices is due to the free number of voices in free composition in general.

Here is an example for neighboring notes in thirds:

Example 267

Handel, Suite No. 7, Passacaille

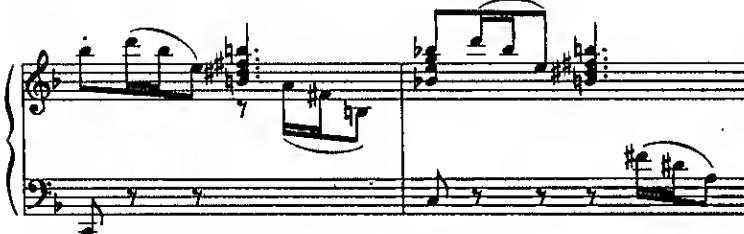
main    upper    lower    main  
tone    n.    n.    n.    tone



Compare Examples 113 and 167 in *Harmony* for neighboring notes in three voices; J.S. Bach especially was a master of this type.

Most recently it has been Richard Strauss who could compose neighboring notes conceived even in four voices in a most masterful way:

Example 268

R. Strauss, *Till Eulenspiegel's lustige Streiche*

One should avoid interpreting here the fluctuation between  $C^7$  and  $B^7$  (shown in Example 269) as a real modulation; this is an assumption contradicted by the basses alone, which, as can be gleaned from what precedes,

Example 269



present only the V of F major throughout. Instead, one may give the concept of the neighboring note its due even in such an application as this, without finding it an obstacle that the four-voice neighboring note is composed out by means of a motive. (Incidentally, Strauss attempted in the same composition—miniature score, p. 18, bars 1–4—a similar, even more daring experiment, which in my opinion, however, is a complete failure, since the harmony  $B-D-F^{\#}-Ab$  (or  $G^{\#}$ ) placed between the  $F^7$  harmonies is much too remote for voice-leading reasons alone (the  $B$  of the bass moves to  $F$ ) to be perceived either as a modulation or as a neighboring-note harmony.)

By the same token, one should avoid hearing in the following passages anything but neighboring-note harmonies:

Example 270

Schubert, *Winterreise*, "Frühlingstraum"

Example 271

Wagner, *Das Rheingold*, Scene 3

(Rhine-maidens)



In the Schubert excerpt the sustained  $e^1$  in the inner voice (bar 1, fourth eighth-note) shows in itself that the tones  $F^{\#}$  and  $A$  undoubtedly should be heard only as neighbors of  $G$  and  $B$ ; therefore, in the next measure, where in the high register an  $E$  is again sustained, the event at the third eighth-note has to be perceived similarly—indeed, as a configuration of three neighbors:

Example 272



In the Wagner excerpt, one need only imagine an  $e_b^2$ —that is, the fifth of the harmony—at the first quarter-note:

Example 273



From this, one grasps immediately the true character of mere neighboring-note harmonies in the original example as well.

Georg Capellen comments on the latter example in his *Musikalische Akustik* as follows:

In Wagner's music one occasionally encounters these formations; for example: [see Example 271], in which  $G-B-F_b$  is not an enharmonic  $E$  minor triad but an elliptical  $E_b^2$  sound with the fifth raised and the ninth lowered (*Hochquintiefnonklang*) so that the succession of sounds belongs to the cadence MRM; anyone who has developed acoustical sensitivity will hear this immediately.<sup>9</sup>

Here I can only advise Mr. Capellen that he would do better to become an acoustician and leave hands and ears off our art. For whoever perceives a somewhat more individual manifestation of the neighboring note—how much higher J.S. Bach's daring neighboring-note in example 148<sup>10</sup> ranks, for example!—as nothing more nor less than an "elliptical *Hochquintiefnonklang*" (sic!) is a barbarian and deserves his "exotic music"! I must repeat my remark in *Harmony*, §63: "How easy it is to fabricate theory and history of music when one hears badly!"

Highly stimulating is the study of neighboring notes in Beethoven's Piano Sonata op. 111, Arietta, Variation No. 4 (16), particularly in the triplet figures of the right hand.

The following example shows how, finally the *accented passing tone* (Harmony, §167) is used in free composition.

Example 274

Chopin, Prelude Op. 28 No. 24



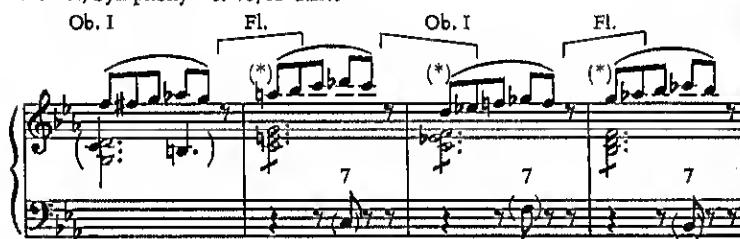
D minor: I

Here the passing tone  $c^2$  (within the space of the fourth  $d^2 - a^1$ ) is frozen as an accented passing tone on the strong beat.

Or another, even more daring example:

Example 275

Mozart, Symphony No. 40, Andante



Here the accented passing tones (see the asterisked notes) do not enter freely, as one might believe, but represent passing tones of the most regular kind: One need only extend the fifth eighth-note of each bar beyond the eighth-note rest to the first eighth-note of the subsequent bar to perceive clearly and immediately the underlying passing character of the accented notes even here. (Compare the same figures later, bars 88, 89, 92, and 93!)

Albrechtsberger mentions on p. 17 "cast-out" notes (*notae abjectae*) and defines them thus: "A cast-out note is a tone that occurs as a leap in passing, but which does not belong to the chord; for example."

Example 276



### Beginning

#### §7. Construction of the beginning

The prescriptions for the beginning, demanded by the first species and certainly retained here as well, are expanded by the option of using, as a license, a half-note rest in the first bar, which, as is self-evident, must then be followed on the upbeat only by one of the perfect consonances: 1, 8, or 5.

While we will learn the usage of still other rests in the remaining species of counterpoint, here only the half-rest is under consideration—indeed, because it indicates the character of the intended species (two half-notes) with the same power and logic as a half-note would do.

For exercises in triple meter [notated in 3], however, it goes without saying that only a quarter-rest should be used instead of the half-rest.

Albrechtsberger mentions this point explicitly on p. 71, where, at the conclusion of two-voice counterpoint, he writes exercises in triple meter as well for each of the species.

### Main Body

#### §8. Variety in treatment of the upbeat

We may well elevate to the rank of an important issue the question of whether the upbeat should have only consonances or perhaps only dissonances throughout. If the latter is, of course, not always possible because of the structure of the given cantus firmus, the former—even though certainly always possible—is nevertheless prohibited. As a reason for this prohibition may be cited not only the goal of learning the application of passing dissonances but, far more, also the aesthetically pleasing effect that results from a felicitous mixture of consonant and dissonant passing tones on the upbeat.

The artistic principle of variety already manifests its beneficial effect in contrapuntal exercises, and it is for this reason that the student is here alerted to it at the proper time.

#### §9. Spacing of the two voices

It is imperative here as well (cf. Part 2, Chapter 1, §24) to attend to [the maintenance of] a suitable distance between the voices, to the extent that one takes at all seriously the pure realization of the vocal principle and strictness of setting. Especially the vocal element requires a correct distance between voices throughout, and only when it is desired to relax the strictness or perhaps to experiment temporarily with effects of an instrumental nature may teacher and student allow the two voices to arrive at a distance from each other greater than that permitted by the vocal principle. It should be kept in mind that the first stage of study should be devoted exclusively to pure vocal writing, while only the second belongs to the instrumental idiom.

It has been discussed already in Part 2, Chapter 1, §24 that larger leaps, especially the sixth (the minor sixth in particular, cf. Part 1, Chapter 2, §15) and the octave, under observance of the principle of melodic fluency, are best suited to regulate the spacing of the voices and to separate them in those instances where they have moved too close together.

In his exercises for the species under consideration, Fux unfortunately does not pay too close attention to the spacing of the voices, so that all too often they go astray into an instrumental idiom. I repeat that such inaccuracies, by necessity, only confuse the study and the purposes that accompany it. See above (p. 162) for the quotation concerning the sixth.

Albrechtsberger, too, unfortunately, pays little more attention [than Fux] to the strictures of the vocal principle, and solves his exercises mostly in an instrumental manner, wherein the spacing between voices is of but little relevance for him.

Cherubini treats the leap of a sixth in a bit more mannered fashion than Fux, but without any real reason. On p. 16, rule 7, he states: "In the first species of counterpoint the leapwise progression by the minor sixth is permitted; in this second species it should not be used unless the voices, because of the nature and pitch level of the given melody, have moved too close together and there is no other means to separate them," etc. And in an "Observation" concerning this rule, he says: "In the first species of counterpoint the leap of the minor sixth is in some measure prohibited, because this interval, especially ascending, is more difficult of intonation than any other permissible interval. This difficulty is amplified here because the notes of shorter duration allow less time to prepare the intonation." Cherubini's advice, formulated somewhat less strictly, may hold good: it is exactly the quality of the cantus firmus and the contrapuntal line that may make it advisable to use the leap of a sixth or octave even in instances where one or the other would have to be completely avoided according to the rules of Fux or Cherubini. For it is not only the purely material distance between voices that is a decisive factor, but also the aesthetic quality of the line, and this applies even in the strictest writing technique!

#### §10. Use of the unison permitted on the upbeat

The unison, still entirely prohibited in the main body of the exercise in the species discussed up to now (cf. Part 2, Chapter 1, §23), is on the contrary permitted here—if not on the downbeat, at least on the upbeat—provided that it can be continued in the most propitious way (that is, by stepwise motion in the direction opposite to that of the leap), as here:

Example 277



Only Bellermann writes about this at length (pp. 152–53):

It is permitted to use the unison, completely disallowed in the previous species, on the unaccented part of the bar; progression that otherwise would be faulty can thus be rectified [examples follow]. One must always take care in using the

unison and see that the counterpoint is set in a melodically pleasing way: that is, if the counterpoint moves by leap into a unison, it should not continue in the same direction, which would lack elegance [examples follow]. A good use of the unison, on the contrary, occurs when the counterpoint moves by step back into [the space of] the leap (be it ascending or descending) [examples follow].

#### §11. A possible extension, resulting from new situations that now arise, of the prohibition of both parallel and nonparallel similar motion

In this species, the prohibition of parallel and nonparallel similar motion [to perfect consonances] receives new nuances of application because of the addition of a note on the upbeat.

To study these nuances, we can identify within the content of two bars (twice two half-notes) three cases, as marked by brackets 1, 2, and 3:



1. In the first case, that is from the upbeat to the downbeat (see bracket 1), the prohibition under consideration is still always in full, and unmitigated force. Only this immediate succession is fully identical to the original situation familiar to us from Part 2, Chapter 1, §6, and, for that reason, it is the only case in which every exception [to the exclusion of parallel or similar motion] continues to be prohibited under all circumstances.

An interesting problem, however, is suggested by the neighboring note—assuming that one decides to use it here occasionally. The question arises whether the neighboring note used on the upbeat exudes so much individuality that it has the power to undo the bad effect of nonparallel similar motion. I would be disinclined to ascribe such compensating effect to the neighboring note, since nonparallel similar motions caused by it do not seem to sound at all better; and I can understand it when Albrechtsberger (who in principle allows the neighboring note [in this species]—see above, §5) regards Beethoven's voice leading in the following exercises as containing faults in need of correction (cf. Nottebohm, *Beethovens Studien*, pp. 51 and 52):

Example 278

Finally, I should point out that especially in this case particular caution needs to be taken with respect to the so-called *ottava battuta*, of which we will learn in §12.

2. The relation of *downbeat to downbeat* (see bracket 2) should, strictly speaking, be completely exempted from the prohibition even of parallel progressions, since it no longer represents an immediate succession of tones. Nevertheless, the ear demands that the prohibition—exactly this constitutes a new extension of its range of application!—has to be respected to a certain extent in this case as well. For it becomes evident that under certain unfavorable circumstances [the progression from] downbeat to downbeat, despite the intervening note on the upbeat, nevertheless sounds almost exactly like a direct succession of parallel octaves or fifths—so strong is the connection made by the ear between both downbeats. In other words: the poor effect of parallel motion manifests itself so strongly here that it cannot be made tolerable to the ear even by the intervention of a third note. In particular, [the leap of] a third at the upbeat turns out to be an interval much too small and unassuming to be able to banish completely the bad impression of parallel motion from downbeat to downbeat:

## Example 279

poor:

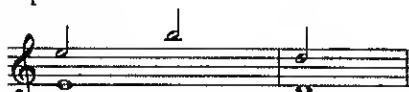


Only a larger leap, for example that of a fourth, is capable of removing the impression of parallel motion by attracting the attention of the ear to its own greater significance. For that reason it is possible to admit parallel motion from downbeat to downbeat, provided a leap larger than a third is used [after the first downbeat].

Two things, however, are not to be overlooked: first, that the tone on the upbeat, which has the function of remedying parallel octaves between downbeats, must occur only in contrary motion to the *cantus firmus*, since, for reasons stated under I, one may not write as in the following example:

## Example 280

poor:



and, second, that because of the leap, no note may be used on the upbeat that is not consonant with the *cantus firmus*; thus, it is not permitted to write as in the next example:

## Example 281

poor:



The question to what extent, on the other hand, parallel fifths as well can and may occur on the upbeats in connection with procedures for avoiding parallel octaves on downbeats—for example:

## Example 282



—will be discussed later on under 3.

Finally, since the prohibition of parallel motion extends only under special circumstances to the relationship between the downbeats, and such successions are in principle allowed—that is, since the prohibition must cease to apply to more remote relationships—it is self-evident that *nonparallel similar motion* from downbeat to downbeat is generally permitted.

3. In the case of *upbeat to upbeat* (see bracket 3), which again does not constitute a direct succession of tones, parallel octaves, fifths, and unisons strike the ear as unpleasant only if several of them occur in succession. Without such a provocation of the ear, however, the *parallel* motions in this category—they are called *afterbeat* parallel octaves, fifths, and unisons—are quite tolerable; this in turn frees *nonparallel similar motion* of any restriction whatever.

It is worth noting, however, that it is more advantageous by far in the case of afterbeat relationships if at least the downbeats are free of parallel motions that might on their own again have to invoke the prohibition (see above, Example 282).

If I shed some light with a few examples already here, in continuation of the ideas expressed in Part 2, Chapter 1, §14, on how free composition treats parallel and nonparallel similar motion, I do so notwithstanding that a more detailed discussion in a special section will follow later. [FrC, §§162-164.]

First, a prefatory remark:

It goes without saying that ideas in free composition are expressed mostly in a texture of more than two voices; nevertheless, it may be noted that any such texture ultimately contains aspects of two-voice counterpoint as well. The two-voice counterpoint between highest and lowest voice alone already justifies the citation of examples of free composition within a section on two-voice counterpoint. (One should not overlook, however, that composition

for more than two voices permits licenses to a considerably greater extent than does two-voice counterpoint! For example, the following content:

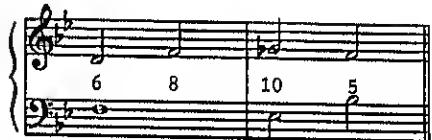
Example 283

Brahms, Variations on a Theme by Handel Op. 24, Var. XXIII



can be reduced to a clear two-voice counterpoint:

Example 284



The real connection between strict counterpoint and free composition can in general be discovered only in reductions similar to the one just quoted.

Finally, it should yet be emphasized that the special cases as indicated by brackets on p. 197 do not manifest themselves quite so exactly in examples of free composition, but this should be expected in view of the nature of the latter.

And now the examples.

Schubert writes:

Example 285

Schubert, Piano Sonata Op. 42, Andante poco moto



If one is so inclined, the octaves here, since they occur in direct succession, could be considered octaves of the first category (bracket 1). Free composition justifies the parallel octaves in this case, however, in that the bass progression strictly coincides with the scale-degree progression; that is, the lowest tones D—G themselves represent scale degrees to such an extent that their character as obbligato bass movement (*obligater Bassgang*) recedes into the background by comparison. Thus, it follows that a voice expressing the scale degree progression itself can under certain circumstances also permit parallels exactly for this reason.

The same reason is also decisive for the parallel fifths of the following example:

Example 286

Mozart, Piano Trio K. 496, I  
Vln.



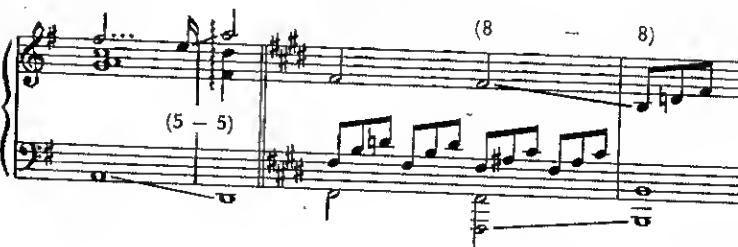
Here, too, it is permissible to speak of a direct succession of fifths (bracket 1, as it were), because one may disregard the composing out of the harmonies as represented by the eighth-note motive of the violin; it is the power of the scale degrees, however, that suggests the necessity of the parallel fifths. For better understanding, the sequence of scale degrees may be clarified by assuming ellipses (cf. *Harmony*, Example 165) as follows:

C major: I<sup>7</sup>—(II—) V—(I—) #IV—V<sub>4</sub><sup>5</sup> etc.

But if one wanted to avoid parallels such as proved necessary in the Schubert example, one would have to resort to anti-parallels; compare Example 212 as well as the following examples:

Example 287

a) Chopin, Prelude Op. 28 b) Beethoven, Piano Sonata Op. 27 No. 2, I  
No. 3



If we consider the following examples, which again seem to present parallel octaves in direct succession:

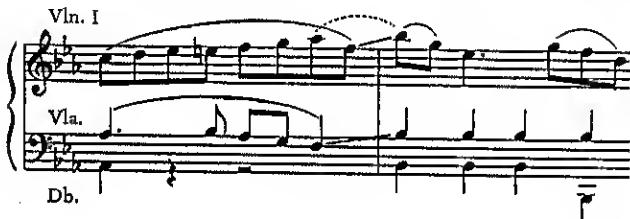
Example 288

Mendelssohn, Piano Concerto Op. 25, I



Example 289

Mozart, Piano Concerto K. 482, I



these and similar octave-parallels are justified not only by the fact that the bass also produces the scale degree itself (as in Example 288 in particular), but also by the aspect of composing out, which carries even more weight here. The last eighth-notes in both examples are basically elements of the composing-out process and, therefore, represent only melodic detours (cf. Part I, Chapter 2, §18), so to speak, that can easily be omitted; after the detours are eliminated, however, only nonparallel similar motions remain—specifically, from the first eighth-note of the fourth quarter to the first eighth-note of the next bar:

$$\left. \begin{array}{l} a^1 - g^1 \\ d - G \end{array} \right\} \text{and} \left. \begin{array}{l} ab^2 - bb^2 \\ f - bb \end{array} \right\}$$

These are progressions that are clearly justified in free composition, especially in composition for more than two voices. (Compare the Wagner excerpt, Example 182, and also Example 285.)

In the Mozart example, moreover, the principle takes effect that a voice of free composition can always abandon its character as an obbligato voice and strike out along the path of mere doubling; in this latter function it likes to join with another voice—indeed, precisely in parallel octaves!

A situation similar to that of the second bracket (concerning the relation of downbeat to downbeat) is found in the Chopin example in *Harmonielehre*, Fig. 370 bars 8–9.<sup>11</sup> The fact that the bass progression embodies the scale degrees is again the reason that justifies the parallel octaves. That, furthermore, the melody leaps by a fourth—a device that had a remedying effect already in strict counterpoint (see p. 198)—carries, therefore, certainly much less weight in comparison to the principal reason.

In the following two examples of antiparallels:

Example 290

Brahms, Symphony No. 4, I



Beethoven, Piano Sonata Op. 27 No. 2, I



one may justify the passages not only by reason of scale-degrees and of bracket 2<sup>12</sup> but also by the considerations mentioned in connection with Example 288. However, it is clear that antiparallels, as can be seen, can occur even in the middle of a passage, and are not always limited, as is often believed, to cadences alone.

The masters avoid octave-parallels involving *neighboring notes* even in free composition. They write, for example:

Example 291

a) J. S. Bach, Two-Part Invention No. 1

b) Handel, Suites de pièces, 2nd collection, No. 1, Prélude



At a, there occurs on the second eighth-note in the bass the tone *a* instead of *d*<sup>1</sup>, and at b, *Bb* instead of *eb*. (Compare also *Harmony*, Example 200, where, at points marked with an asterisk, the neighboring note is avoided for the same reason as in Example 291, and the path to the tonic had to be taken instead.)

On the other hand—if I may discuss this point here—the masters write nonparallel similar motion to fifths without hesitation in the same situations involving neighboring notes, for example:

## Example 292

Handel, Suites de pièces, 2nd collection, No. 1, Prélude

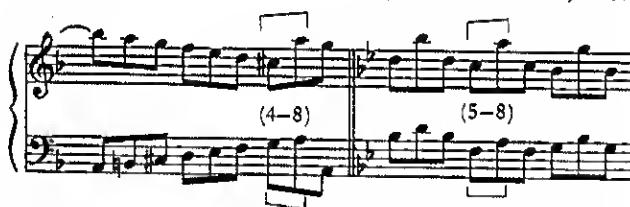


Concerning *nonparallel similar* motions, however, their justification in free composition is the more natural in that the composing out of harmonic concepts and the elaboration of latent polyphony (compare pp. 59 and 63) already lead to them of necessity. Here are two additional examples:

## Example 293

J. S. Bach, English Suite No. 6, Prélude

Handel, Suites de pièces, 2nd collection, No. 1, Air with Variations, Var. III



Afterbeat octaves (see above, bracket 3) enjoy complete freedom in free composition. For if in examples such as the following:

## Example 294

J. S. Bach, English Suite No. 2, Prélude



the unifying spirit of the scale degree is added (in this case, the harmony A-C-E), then there is even less reason to criticize such octaves, when the downbeats<sup>13</sup> have thirds and sixths, respectively.

Another example:

## Example 295

Brahms, Piano Sonata Op. 5, II



Fux teaches (pp. 75-76):

It should be noted, then, that the leap of a third can avoid neither two successive fifths nor two successive octaves, because the note [which] occurs on the upbeat in such a way is regarded as if it were not present; thus, because such a note, as a consequence of shortness of duration and limited space, cannot communicate the interval in such a way that the ear fails to recognize the relationship of two successive fifths and octaves. . . .

It is different in the case of a leap that contains a larger space—for example, the fourth, fifth, and sixth—since there the distance from the first note to the second has the effect that the ear has, in a manner of speaking, already forgotten the first note on the downbeat by the arrival of the second note, likewise on the downbeat. . . .

Fux even mentions that nonparallel similar motions, for example 6—5, are remedied by the leap of a fourth (cf. Table III, Figure 8). To state this explicitly, however, was basically superfluous, since it was self-evident.

Albrechtsberger discusses the problem at hand (pp. 36-38) in the same way as Fux. He concludes the discussion of so-called *afterbeat octaves*, fifths, or unisons with the following comment: "However, I advise beginners not to write many afterbeat fifths or octaves, since they affront many an ear in two-voice counterpoint."

Cherubini (pp. 13 and 14, rule 3) couches his thoughts in stricter terms. Despite a different formulation, even he arrives only at the same result as the teachers mentioned previously, but he is very much inclined to prohibit in general all parallel octaves and fifths from downbeat to downbeat, as can be seen from the following:

I note, however, that these ways of avoiding fifths and octaves were considered very reproachable licenses in two-voice counterpoint by the strict masters of old. I share the same opinion, and believe that two octaves or fifths on the strong beat can by no means be eliminated by intervening notes, whatever they may be, on the weak beat, unless the tempo is so extremely slow that all beats can be interpreted as strong. This restriction, however, does not suffice in all cases and, therefore, should not be viewed as a rule.

I conclude from this that the above method [of avoiding octaves and fifths] should be used only in case one writes for more than two voices or in rare instances where one cannot find a different solution.

I have made all these remarks and examples concerning the avoidance of octaves and fifths for the purpose of demonstrating the insufficiency of the rule rather than proving that they really can be avoided [by such means]. The rule, which I prefer to regard as falsely attributed to the old theorists, is nevertheless not entirely without value and can occasionally serve a useful purpose.

The basic error, however, that leads Cherubini to such strictness is again the fateful confusion of counterpoint and free composition. What role does tempo play in the exercises of strict counterpoint? Isn't the principal goal here to explore tonal effects in relation to their causes, without concern for tempo and rhythm? And isn't this purpose served if the ear is made aware of the fact that, in the case of two octaves on successive downbeats, it makes a difference whether a leap of a third or a fourth is used on the intervening upbeat? Even Cherubini couldn't ask more of the theory of counterpoint. Another error of Cherubini's is that he obviously considers it implicit in the rule itself that the prohibition of parallel octaves and fifths extend also to downbeats under all circumstances. But this is not the case. The extension of the prohibition to tones that do not occur in direct succession is, on the contrary, an exceptional situation caused only by the special circumstance of the third-leap; in case the latter does not occur, the prohibition, too, is canceled and again the *norm* prevails that the prohibition cannot apply to tones that do not occur in direct succession. This result, however, is just the opposite of that given by Cherubini in the above remarks.

## §12. *The so-called ottava battuta*

While motion to an octave is usually not only permitted but also required to occur by contrary motion, there is an exception to this rule, in which the octave, though arrived at through contrary motion, nevertheless makes a bad impression; this has led to the prohibition of such an octave. Specifically, when the lower voice progresses simply by step from upbeat to downbeat and the upper voice at the same time moves by a larger leap such that the two voices suddenly meet in an octave on the downbeat, then the bad effect of a so-called *ottava battuta* is produced.

Consider, for example, the following octaves, all of which are arrived at through contrary motion:

Example 296

A difference in the effect of these examples will easily be discovered.

While perhaps only an "empty" impression on the downbeat can be observed at a and b (a result, especially in two-voice counterpoint, simply of the octave itself), we feel the emptiness of the octave at c and d, on the other

hand, to a much stronger degree, for reasons that have to do less with the octave itself than with voice leading. The poor effect is essentially softened at c in that here the upper voices as well at least progresses by step from the upbeat to the downbeat, but at d it protrudes more strongly because the upper voice moves by a larger leap.

This poor effect at d can be defined in the following way: our ear perceives the melody as too peculiar and individual, because the leap A to D occurs in the soprano.

First, every modestly musical ear senses that, instead of the actually chosen path, a simpler and more natural way would have led here to the same goal, such as:

Example 297

Two-voice counterpoint, however—and this must be stressed—is unable to make us understand why, instead of the simpler and more natural course given in Example 297, the singular path, as at d in Example 296, was chosen.

Second, the decidedly melodic nature of the leap attracts our attention especially because it is at the same time highlighted as a sharp contrast by the more tranquil step of a second in the lower voice. Our instinct, however, seems to require—not without justification, to be sure—that the more extensive leap, on the contrary, should instead occur in the lower voice, while the upper voice, which attracts our ear first of all, ought to maintain the natural quality of the melody and, therefore, move only in smaller, more fluent and singable intervals.

Third, the brevity of the upbeat emphasizes the unpleasant effect of the situation even more drastically; in particular, it appears as though the exaggerated tension in the melody were almost entirely disproportionate to the brevity of time during which it occurred.

Fourth, finally, one cannot disregard the effect of anticipation (A to D), which doubtless adds to the poor effect.

In view of so many disturbances of the natural effect, it becomes clear that a voice-leading such as that at d has to be prohibited entirely.

I mentioned already that at c all bad effects, in so far as they can be attributed to the leap alone, are absent; besides the empty effect of the octave, there is only the disturbance that the lower voice lacks the larger interval, which, by its nature, would have established a counterweight to the emptiness of the next octave. The question, therefore, is whether this deficiency alone is enough to prohibit such a voice-leading. I myself would prefer to let only the given situation decide this question: in two-voice counterpoint, at least, an octave of the kind at c will sound too empty under certain circumstances; on other occasions, especially in composition for many voices and in a more

favorable milieu, however, the effect can be good. Thus, within the prohibition of the *ottava battuta*, one would have to differentiate more closely between cases c and d, and limit the prohibition to the latter in particular—that is, to cases in which the upper voice progresses by a larger leap.

Furthermore, since the *ottava battuta* involves *motion from upbeat to downbeat*—a progression that by its very nature highlights the bad effect—it is clear that the prohibition could not be taught already in the context of the first species, where the distinction between downbeat and upbeat is still lacking, but had to await the second species (as here), which manifests those categories (analogous to the accented and unaccented parts of a bar in free composition) for the first time. The only alternative is to remove the problem of the *ottava battuta* from strict counterpoint altogether and treat it instead only in the context of free composition.

For the same reasons as in the *ottava battuta*, I consider it a fault when, instead of an octave, a *unison* or a *fifth* is approached in such a way that the lower voice moves only by step while the upper voice progresses by a larger leap. In the following example:

## Example 298

a) Albrechtsberger, p. 90      b) Fux IX, 1

the effect of such voice leading may be experienced; note especially how in the example at b the size of the leap in the soprano contrasts with the unassuming second of the lowest voice in an all too individual manner.

As examples of *ottava battuta* in free composition may be cited:

## Example 299

a) Mendelssohn, Piano Concerto      b) J. S. Bach, St. Matthew Passion, Aria "Blute nur"

## The Second Species: Two Notes Against One

## Example 299 continued

c) Mozart, Piano Trio K. 496, I

The following example shows a *quinta battuta*:

## Example 300

Brahms, Piano Quartet Op. 25, I

And when Brahms writes in the song *Auf dem Kirchhofe* op. 105 no. 4, bars 9–10, as follows:

## Example 301

Brahms, "Auf dem Kirchhofe"

in view of the fact that the bass also could have been written this way:

## Example 302

we may recognize a *quinta battuta* avoided in a most interesting way.<sup>14</sup>

Fux's discussion of the *ottava battuta* (pp. 72-73) has certainly become the definitive one. I therefore quote it in full:

[Aloys:] Then, from the tenth bar to the eleventh [of the exercise under discussion], you have progressed from a tenth to an octave in such a way that the lower part moves up a step while the upper part descends a step; such an octave is called *thesis* by the Greeks and *battuta* by the Italians, because it appears at the beginning of the bar. This octave is prohibited. I have often pondered this matter, but I can find neither the reason for the prohibition nor the difference that makes this octave permissible.<sup>15</sup>

## Example 303

Fux II, 18



while the next is disallowed:

## Example 304

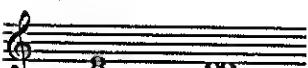
Fux II, 19



where both octaves are produced by contrary motion. It is different with the unison that arises by progressing from the third to the prime—for example:

## Example 305

Fux II, 20



in which case the unison, wherein the proportion is that of one to one, is heard only very slightly, and appears as though engulfed and lost; for that reason, the unison is never to be used in this species of counterpoint, except at the beginning and end. But to return to the octave called *battuta* mentioned above, I leave it up to your free choice whether you use it or avoid it; for it is not a matter of great importance. But when the octave is so constituted that the lower voice rises a step while the upper leaps downward several steps, in my opinion that is not to be tolerated even in composition for more than two voices:

## Example 306

Fux II, 14



This also holds true especially of the unison:

## Example 307

Fux II, 15



In composition for eight voices, such leaps in the bass and in voices that represent the bass can scarcely be avoided, as will be mentioned at the proper time.

Fux presents these thoughts in the context of the first species. This in itself already signifies a misunderstanding of the *ottava battuta*, because here the element is still lacking which so clearly exposes the emptiness of the octave in the first place—namely, the differentiation of downbeat and upbeat. The *ottava battuta* in general cannot really produce its full effect until free composition, where the accented and unaccented parts of the bar play such a prominent role; see Examples 299 and 300 above.

However, we do not learn from Fux what effect it has when the upper voice progresses by leap instead of the lower one, and why in this case the *ottava battuta* is to be prohibited; it is simply his "opinion" that such a voice leading should not be tolerated, even in counterpoint for more than two voices.

Albrechtsberger deals with the *ottava battuta* as follows (pp. 28-29):

It remains to be noted that the old teachers prohibited the *ottava battuta* in composition for two as well as more than two voices. I prefer to use it neither in strict nor in free writing for two voices; it may be acceptable in three-voice writing, even more so in four-voice, especially if double counterpoint at the octave is involved. The *ottava battuta* (in German: *Streichoktave*) is that octave which occurs on the stroke or beat, that is, the accented part of the bar. [Here follows an explanation of what constitutes an accented part of the bar through all meters.] When a perfect octave is approached in the upper voice by leaping through a fourth, fifth, or sixth from an unaccented to an accented part of the bar and the lower voice ascends only by a half- or whole-step in contrary motion, the *ottava battuta* results; it can occur in the following ways:

## Example 308

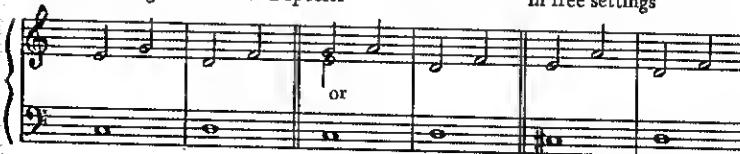
In strict setting of the first species



In free settings

## Example 309

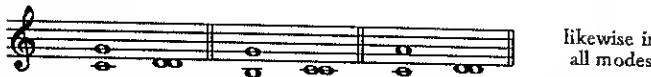
In strict setting of the second species



In free settings

[Examples follow of both third-species counterpoint and free composition.] The reason it is prohibited may be that it becomes too faint and almost resembles the unison; for example:

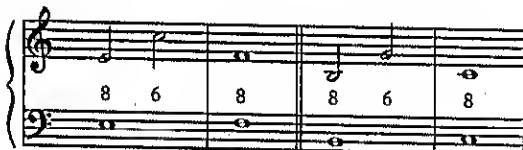
Example 310



As is evident, Albrechtsberger is no more able than Fux to specify the true reasons for the prohibition; in attributing the poor effect solely to the emptiness of the octave, Albrechtsberger, too, disregards the extent to which it is caused by the larger leap itself as well as the downbeat. True, he formulates the prohibition somewhat more precisely, in that he stipulates the leap of at least a fourth in the upper voice as a condition for its application; for that reason, c in our Example 296 would not be an *ottava battuta* for him. This alone already marks an essential step forward, as compared to Fux, in understanding the problem of *ottava battuta*.

Cherubini seems in general to ignore the prohibition of *ottava battuta*; he does not mention the term anywhere, nor does he concern himself in practice with the traditional prohibition. On the contrary, he writes in Example 40 on p. 14:

Example 311



and since he considers the octave-parallels of the downbeats to be avoided more convincingly by the leap of a sixth than, for example, a fifth or a fourth, he is not even deterred by the unpleasant effect of the *ottava battuta* that is undoubtedly produced in this case!

Bellermann follows entirely on the track of the venerable master Fux, whom he cites, incidentally, on pp. 136–137. Nevertheless, we find in his work (p. 205) the following voice leading:

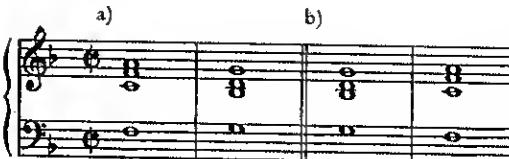
Example 312



which, according to Fux's views and, thus, also those of Bellermann, would better have been avoided. On his own, Bellermann adds the following thoughts in a footnote (p. 137):

I find this rule too somewhat strict; nevertheless, one must admit that it originated in a very correct observation. In connecting the following two triads, for example, in four-voice writing:

Example 313



it will be noticed that the second triad at a sounds far less voluminous—one could almost say empty—in comparison with the first one. In free composition, where one is not limited by a cantus firmus, this usage at the accented part of the bar is not recommended; the same triads, however, sounded in reverse order as at b, have an exceptionally beautiful effect.

Unfortunately, everything in this remark is misguided. Whether the approach to the octave from the tenth, as at a in Example 313, is not, on the contrary, strong and convincing and, thus, the opposite of an empty effect, can obviously be decided only by the special circumstances of a given piece. I note also that neither Fux nor Albrechtsberger viewed a motion to an octave like that shown at a as a prohibited *ottava battuta*. Bellermann, therefore, should have demonstrated with different and more convincing examples as well as with more persuasive arguments that the problem of the *battuta*, nevertheless, exists also in free composition. That the example at b has nothing whatever to do with the problem is obvious.

The more recent theorists have little concern for the effect of the *ottava battuta*; nevertheless, it cannot be disavowed and, therefore, also cannot be ignored in theory.

### §13. The possibility of a change of chord at the upbeat

The second beat, that is, the upbeat, can occasionally even present a *change of chord*.<sup>16</sup>

This type of occasion is, to be sure, limited to a single situation—specifically, when a sixth follows a fifth, or vice versa:

Example 314



This is a direct consequence of the following consideration: on the one hand, passing dissonances must be excluded from the present issue because, precisely as a result of their dissonant nature, they can establish no new harmony (consonance) at all [Part 3, Chapter 2, §2]; on the other hand,

however, any other consonance [than a fifth or sixth] would quite simply only complete or continue the harmony of the downbeat:

Example 315



In free composition, unlimited freedom of harmonic change awaits the composer: it may be executed within a bar, within a single beat, and, moreover, also with devices other than merely the successions 5—6 and 6—5. By contrast, the change of harmony mentioned above is the *only* one admitted by strict counterpoint. Just in its preliminary uniqueness, however, it forms the entrance, the portal, of the problem of change of harmony altogether.

But from the necessity of clearly expressing the key at the very beginning of an exercise there follows the obligation at least not to use such a change of harmony immediately—that is, not in the first or second bar—because otherwise it would lead too quickly away from the key.

To make this point clearer still, I quote here the following (analogous) correction by Albrechtsberger, which applies to an exercise by Beethoven in triple meter (see Nottebohm, p. 49, No. 4):

Example 316



A



The unfolding of the intended key, according to Albrechtsberger, has to be rigorously observed even this far into the exercise. Decisions about this matter, however, can be made only on the basis of the given *cantus firmus*.

Cherubini writes in rule 4 on p. 15:

Counterpoint of this type [second species] provides the license of having either one or two chords per bar; thus, if one decides to use only one chord, each half note must be a different consonance, but both must also belong to the same chord.

Example 317

Ex. 41



If two chords are desired, the chord on the accented part of the bar must be consonant; the chord on the unaccented part must also be consonant, but should differ from the first.

Example 318

Ex. 42



However adroit these observations may be, they contain an erroneous and regrettable contradiction that cannot be reconciled with the spirit of counterpoint. Why introduce here the concept of harmony (see Example 41) in the sense of *harmonic theory*? How is it possible in counterpoint to conceive of a sixth-chord and cause the voice leading to be influenced by this preconceived notion? Isn't it necessary, on the contrary, to generate voice leading in contrapuntal exercises only in accord with its own laws—that is, the requirements of the line, of melodic fluency, and the like? Furthermore, despite the second part of the rule, and despite Example 42, Cherubini seems not to have been aware that in strict counterpoint only the intervals 5 and 6 can signify a change of harmony.

#### §14. The prohibition of tone-repetition is now reinstated

Repetition of tones is *prohibited* in the second species. Thus we return here to the original prohibition, as it applies to the *cantus firmus*, and we justify this return (a contrast to the first species, which permitted the repetition of tones—compare Part 2, Chapter 1, §26) by observing that the enriched possibilities provided in the second species by the two half-notes make it possible now to achieve a beautiful melodic line even without any licenses; thus it is necessary to permit an exception to the otherwise universal prohibition of tone-repetition.

Obviously viewing the renewed prohibition of tone-repetition as self-evident, Fux and Albrechtsberger remain silent on this point. In Cherubini's text, on the other hand, the prohibition is already implied in his formulation of rule 4 cited in §13 above, especially by his words "a different consonance." Bellermann explicitly discusses the prohibition on p. 150.

### §15. Certain faults that can result from the proliferation of tones

The proliferation of tones in this species could, more easily than in the cantus firmus and in the first species, lead to certain violations of contrapuntal voice leading and the postulate of melodic fluency. For this reason, one must beware of outlining a triad, a major or minor seventh-chord, or (still worse) a ninth-chord with three or four tones. It is equally important to remember to change direction after a larger leap.

Compare the comment by *Albrechtsberger* quoted in Part 1, Chapter 2, §§19 and 20. Here I want to emphasize again the results of that discussion; in strict counterpoint, only the construction of the cantus firmus and the course of the contrapuntal voice can decide whether or not several tones necessarily group into a unit. If they do, it is unimportant whether the unit itself is a triad [or not], since any unit-formation is strictly forbidden in the exercise. Therefore, *Albrechtsberger* is correct in writing on p. 42:

#### Example 319

c. f.

and in commenting on the voice leading as follows: "Secondly, it is of significance that especially this C [that is, the concluding C] permits and justifies the major-seventh chord produced by leaping through four notes: C, E, C, and B, because as octave of the preceding C it makes the sensitive note B move upward, whereby the last three bars of the counterpoint establish a good melody." And similarly, he allows the following voice leading of a Beethoven exercise (compare Nottebohm, *Beethovens Studien*, p. 49):

#### Example 320

and remarks: "It is an error if the two notes that form a seventh fall on downbeats," for example:

#### Example 321

It may, however, be risky to prejudice such cases of actual writing procedure, which under more favorable circumstances could scoff even at this rule. Really, enough has been said if the student is instructed to avoid unit-formations, no matter how they originate.

From our strict viewpoint it is obvious, however, that *Albrechtsberger* oversteps the limits of strict counterpoint by writing, on p. 99 in a three-voice exercise of the third species, as follows:

#### Example 322

c. f.

In counterpoint of quarter notes, he outlines the diminished triad and, furthermore, even uses the interval of a diminished fifth!

### §16. The prohibition of "monotony"

The proliferation of tones, however, could evoke, even more than in the first species, the danger of a unified motivic, melodic-thematic formation; for that reason, I again emphatically caution against such shapes.

Compare above, p. 101, the quotation from *Albrechtsberger*. *Fux*, however, writes without scruple as follows (Table IX, Figure 2):

#### Example 323

Fux IX, 2

#### Cadence

### §17. Cadential formulas

The stipulation requiring both leading tones in the cadences of strict counterpoint can be satisfied in exercises of the present species only by using 5—6 | 8 in the upper counterpoint and 5—3 | 1 in the lower (compare also Part 1, Chapter 2, §23).

#### Example 324

a) 5 6 8      b)

5 3 1

In this context it is to be expressly emphasized that the leading tone must actually be the *penultimate* tone of the counterpoint, never the antepenultimate; thus it is never permitted to reverse the order of tones as follows (compare Part 2, Chapter 1, §29, Examples 234 and 235):

Example 325



Only in exceptional cases, when the above formulas would be entirely impossible for one reason or another (for example, because of the peculiar construction of the *cantus firmus*), is it permitted to fall back on the closing formulas of first species—that is, to use a whole note in the penultimate bar.

Fux remarks already in the context of first species (p. 66, but compare also pp. 67, 69, 74, 76, etc.) that “if the *cantus firmus* is in the lower voice, a major sixth must be used with the penultimate note; if it is in the upper voice, the minor third is required.” Thus Fux at the same time opts for the requirement of raising the leading tone in the Dorian, Mixolydian, and Aeolian modes: *c* to *c*♯, *f* to *f*♯, and *g* to *g*♯!

It deserves to be mentioned in this connection that Beethoven, too, has dealt in his own way with the problem of the raised leading-tone in the Dorian mode (compare *Harmony*, p. 77ff.) In one of Beethoven’s sketchbooks kept in the archive of the *Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde* in Vienna there is a curious and ingenious idea, hastily written in the margin in Beethoven’s hand and, so far as I am aware, unnoticed until now; it is an attempt to avoid the *C*♯ in the cadence of the Dorian mode, as follows:

Example 326



Instead of 5—6—8 (compare Example 324 above) he uses 6—5—8—in other words, a kind of plagal effect, as though III—I. Beethoven failed to see, however, that the cadence in the Dorian mode too requires both leading tones always in direct succession [to the tonic]:  $\begin{smallmatrix} C & D \\ E & D \end{smallmatrix}$ , and that there was only one remedy for the defect that bothered him: to give up the Dorian mode altogether!

Albrechtsberger indulges on p. 36 in various cadential formulas which, however, in many cases really belong to the domain of free composition. That he at least retained the requirement of always having the leading tone directly precede the final tone, however, can be proven by pointing not only to the cadential formulas to be cited later (p. 93f.) but also to the following correction of an error by Beethoven (Nottebohm, p. 52):

Example 327



*Bellermann*, too, speaks on p. 153 of the whole-note in the penultimate bar as an exception.

Regarding Cherubini’s absurd lapse in this matter (p. 31, rule 7), see the citation in Part 3, Chapter 2, §7.

## Exercises

Example 328

Fux III, 3 and III, 12

Soprano

1. { Alto (c. f.) 5 8 3 4 6 3 5 8 3 4

2. { Tenor 8 3 6 3 5 3 4 8 6

Example 328 *continued*  
Fux III, 15 and III, 16

Alto

Fux IV, 4 and 5  
Soprano

Example 328 *continued*

Albrechtsberger p. 42  
Soprano

Example 328 *continued*

Albrechtsberger p. 43

Soprano

9.

10.

11.

12.

Albrechtsberger p. 70

Alto

11.

12.

Example 328 *continued*

Cherubini Ex. 48

Soprano

12.

13.

Cherubini Ex. 48

Alto

13.

14.

Bellermann p. 154 (c. f. by Fux)

Soprano

14.

15.

Example 328 *continued*

H. Schenker

Soprano

16.

17.

H. Schenker (c. f. by Fux)

Soprano

18.

19.

Example 328 *continued*

H. Schenker

Alto (c. f.)

20.

## Comments on the Preceding Exercises

No. 1. The melodic line of the counterpoint lingers in an almost too monotonous way at the pitch-level of  $d^2$ ; furthermore, it meanders awkwardly and aimlessly in the region of the fourth between  $a^1$  and  $d^2$ .

No. 2. In bars 2 and 3, the two  $a$ s of the tenor are somewhat disturbing, because they appear twice in succession. Observe that in the last three bars the effect is already reminiscent of free composition.

No. 3. The line is beautiful; the only disturbing element is that it touches twice on the apex-tone  $a^1$  (bars 7 and 10). Bellermann is unjustified when he "corrects" this

exercise—incidentally, with little success—in the cantus firmus as well as in the counterpoint (bars 7 and 8) as follows:

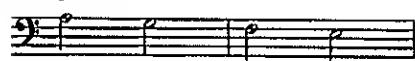
Example 329

cpt.



No. 4. A more instrumental approach. (Compare above, §9.) Bellermann uses this exercise as well, but streamlines the leaps in bars 7 and 8 by changing the counterpoint as follows:

Example 330



No. 5. A counterpoint with a most beautiful line. Observe the fortunate location of the apex-tone  $e^2$ .

No. 6. In bars 8 and 9, an effect similarly unpleasant to that in the second exercise at bars 2 and 3.

No. 7. Bars 5 and 6 as well as 7 and 8 show an inappropriate repetition. (Compare above, §16.)

No. 8. In bars 6 and 7, a modulation to F major. Concerning the last three bars, see the quotation above in §15.

No. 9. In the penultimate bar the sixth as well as the seventh tone of E minor is raised (compare Part 1, Chapter 2, §23, Example 140).

No. 10. Written entirely in an instrumental fashion. The intervals are no longer notated in actual size, but are mostly measured from the upper octave of the counterpoint. Unity of space (compare §9) has been completely abandoned here.

No. 12. Instrumental, so far as the distance between voices is concerned. Neighboring note in bar 3! See the quotation above in §5 concerning bars 9 and 10.

No. 14. A flowing, beautiful melody. But observe that Bellermann, even though he believes in the Dorian mode, uses the tone B $\flat$  in bars 4 and 5.

## Chapter 3

# The Third Species: Four Notes Against One

### General Aspects

#### §1. *The principle of the passing dissonance in its application to the rhythm of four quarter-notes*

The use of four quarter-notes in the added counterpoint against each whole note of the cantus firmus makes it possible for passing dissonances to occur at any of three points in the bar: on the second, third, or fourth quarter.

As before, however, dissonances, wherever they may be introduced, must always occur as stepwise passing tones between two consonances, except in the following instance, which is perhaps the only other conceivable possibility:

Example 331



Here, for inevitable reasons that reside both in the fourth D—G of the added voice and also in the tone B of the cantus firmus itself, the diminished fifth actually takes on the role of a consonance, so that the dissonant fourth appears in passing between it and the third.

Particular attention, however, should be paid to the effect of a dissonance that is to be used on the third quarter. To be specific: initially, the third quarter is heard simply as a weak beat; but the ear, by virtue of the further subdivision present of half-notes into quarters, is made conscious that the third quarter contrasts with both the preceding second quarter and the ensuing fourth quarter as a relatively stronger event, as a kind of strong beat. As a result, a typical secondary effect intrudes into the principal effect: it is as

though the dissonance were actually placed again on a strong beat, as though a "first" beat:

Example 332



In this secondary effect, then, is in fact to be sought the origin of the *accented passing tone (Wechselnote)* of free composition, which, accordingly (cf. *Harmony*, §167, and here Part 2, Chapter 2, §5), should be understood as a dissonance that is indeed conceived once again as a passing event, but at the same time gains a position on a strong beat.

Further, it is the artistic principle of *variety*, already articulated in Part 2, Chapter 2, §8, that demands constant pursuit of diversity—just for the sake of aesthetic contrast!—in the use of dissonant passing tones. The student should therefore strive, to the extent that the voice leading permits it at all, to introduce passing tones in colorful succession, so to speak—that is, alongside those on the second and fourth quarters, to use them without hesitation on the third quarter as well.

At the same time, however, it may further be inferred from the continuing validity of the law of the passing second that even here, as before, it remains incorrect to leap away from a *fourth*, for example:

Example 333

poor



This holds true regardless of the extent to which the clarity of the harmonic conception (here the chord F—A—C) expressed by the counterpoint is intensified by the multiplicity of four tones, and regardless of how closely that harmonic clarity approaches our perception with something approximating the expression of a harmony composed out in the manner of free composition (see below, §8).

The exception described above of a fourth which, although it follows a diminished fifth, nevertheless retains the effect of a dissonance passing between two consonances, is taken from an exercise by *Albrechtsberger* (p. 52). I should like to point out only that *Albrechtsberger* himself obviously remained unaware of any peculiarity of this case. He considers it completely self-explanatory, even though on p. 43 he requires that

every dissonance in this species "occur between two consonances." On p. 53 he intentionally constructs the following error:

Example 334



This provides an occasion for the following remark:

The . . . error is the B in the bar under consideration, because it does not proceed upward to the adjacent C; for if in two-voice counterpoint a perfect fourth on the third quarter is not led upward or downward by step, and is instead enclosed between two occurrences of the same tone, the impression made on the listener is that of a dissonant chord; this is just as faulty as if the fourth were to be approached by leap with two half-notes in the second species, for example:

Example 335



But from this it is perfectly clear that *Albrechtsberger* understood very well the peril of the present species—that of attempting, with the given means of four quarter-notes and even in violation of rules, to project a harmony, as though the environment were that of free composition, where such a thing could indeed occur without restriction. *Albrechtsberger* therefore marks as incorrect the following voice leading by Beethoven in the exercise cited by *Nottebohm* on p. 53 under No. 15:

Example 336



He corrects, with good reason, as follows:

Example 337



But the following precept in *Bellermann* (p. 158) may be considered an exaggeration:

... thus here one must take care first of all that the first and third quarters in the bar are consonant with the *cantus firmus*, while on the second and fourth quarters a passing dissonance may be used [examples follow]. After preliminary exercises in which this stricter rule is diligently and repeatedly observed, one may later, in consideration of melodic fluency in the counterpoint, now and then take the liberty of placing a passing dissonance on the third quarter as well; but in that case the second and fourth quarters must always be consonant [examples follow].

But *Bellermann* appears not to be at all aware that even in contrapuntal exercises the principle of variety exerts influence in this matter.

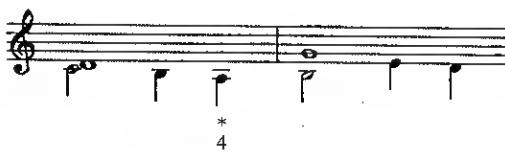
## §2. Use of the neighboring note

The remarks made in the preceding species concerning the *neighboring note* (cf. Part 2, Chapter 2, §5) should also be taken into account in connection with the third species. At the same time, however, one should remember a possibility easily overlooked, namely that the neighboring note (like any other dissonance, and also like the *cambiata*) can be used to very good advantage across the bar line—that is, from the fourth quarter of one bar to the first quarter of the next.

In a certain sense, because of the increased number of notes in the counterpoint, the need for the neighboring note is even more urgent here than in the preceding species. Nevertheless, for the sake of practice, it is desirable at first to adhere in the exercises to only the strictest formulation, in order to learn to solve the problem of melodic fluency and beauty also, insofar as possible, without using the neighboring note—and thus under more difficult conditions.

Accordingly, Fux, too, in keeping with his view cited in Part 2, Chapter 2, §5, appears to prefer complete avoidance of the neighboring note. He deems to use it now and again only in the most pressing circumstances, such as in an exercise of the fifth species:

Example 338  
Fux VI, 11



or the following:

Example 339

Fux X, 3

Fux XVIII, 1



A voice leading such as the following, however:

Example 340

Fux XVIII, 2



which uses even the anticipation (*Bellermann's alleged neighboring note*), occurs in Fux's work only this one time.

Like Fux, *Bellermann* too makes a commitment to the stricter formulation (p. 158): "Although the neighboring note is occasionally found in counterpoint of this species by sixteenth-century composers, its use in exercises is not permitted, because if it is used, quarter-note motion can be achieved without effort." The only misleading part of this is his reference to sixteenth-century compositions, which certainly have at least no direct relevance to the topic.

## Beginning

### §3. The quarter-rest as a license

If a rest is to be used at the beginning, as in the preceding species, it must always be a *quarter-rest*, for that alone is able to give prior notice to the coming quarter notes.

In exercises in triple meter ( $\frac{3}{4}$ ), for similar reasons, only an *eighth-rest* is to be used.

## Main Body

### §4. Increased use of the unison

In the third species, the unison finds a more favorable environment than in the second. For in addition to the possibility of *contrary motion*—which

remains available here in the third species when the unison occurs on the fourth quarter—, if the unison is placed on the second or third quarter, it enjoys also the advantages of oblique motion, which were unknown in the second species:

### Example 341



## §5. The prohibition of parallel and nonparallel similar motion may have still wider application

Concerning ranges of application of the prohibition of parallel and nonparallel similar motion, the four quarter-notes of the present species allow for the discrimination of four relationships, illustrated here as in the preceding species by means of brackets:



I. In bracket 1, concerning the actually *direct* succession of two tones, the prohibition applies in its strictest form and entirely without exception (cf. Part 2, Chapter 1, §6 and Part 2, Chapter 2, §11—bracket 1—and the pertinent remarks).

2. The relation of *upbeat* to *downbeat* (bracket 2) takes a form analogous to that of the second bracket in the second species (see Part 2, Chapter 2, §11), though certainly with the distinction that the second bracket there (in the second species) depicts the relationship of downbeat to downbeat. Accordingly, here as in the earlier case, the rule can be applied directly—that is, *parallel* motion is in principle better forbidden than allowed (although here again, as in the second species, the possibility exists of redemption by means of a leap larger than a third); *nonparallel similar* motion, however, is completely exempt from the prohibition.

3. But in the relationship of *downbeat* to *downbeat* in this species—which provides at least the further advantage that three tones of the counterpoint intervene and lay claim to our attention—*parallel* motion can be at least in principle all the more easily tolerated. Yet it should be scrupulously observed that if the counterpoint is not skillfully constructed, even in the relationship depicted by this bracket—thus in the most remote relationship—the ear nevertheless recognizes parallel motion and actually perceives it as a fault. So

the prohibition, since it is able to assert itself even in this relationship, can boast of another advance over what had already been achieved in the second species: just see how it has managed to extend itself from its initial area of application—the direct succession of two tones (see Part 2, Chapter 1, §6)—to the extent that it is here able to regulate the succession of tones so far removed from one another!

That parallel motions can still be painfully obvious to the ear in spite of the three intervening quarters of the counterpoint, however, is doubtless connected to the fact that it is precisely the downbeats that are strongly impressed on our hearing by the very rhythm of the *cantus firmus* itself. Or in other words: if the *cantus firmus* had a still further subdivision, perhaps into half-notes or the like, the impression of the downbeats at such a distance from one another would undoubtedly be very much weakened.

In view of this perception [of the prominence of downbeats], however, the best recommendation is rather to avoid parallel motions in the main body of the exercise, so that they can be used with so much better conscience only in cadential formulas or with the *nota cambiata* (to be discussed shortly), because of one or another attendant difficulty.

Finally, it goes without saying that *nonparallel similar* motions may be used without restriction, as was the case already in bracket 2.

4. In bracket 4, from *upbeat* to *upbeat*, the formation known as "after-beat" octaves or fifths may be completely exempted from the prohibition.

It may be reported here that in regard to "afterbeat" octaves or fifths, neither Fux nor Albrechtsberger displays any kind of reticence; they use them freely in their exercises as well. Compare Fux, Table VI, Figure 6; Table VI, Figure 9; Table XII, Figure 5; also Albrechtsberger, p. 112 (bars 11-12).

*Cherubini* has the following to say on this matter (p. 20, rule 3): "In two-voice counterpoint, neither one, two, nor even three quarter-notes can avoid a prohibited octave- or fifth-succession, or cancel its effect, even if in certain cases contrary motion is used, or leaps greater than a third."

### Example 342

one quarter-note:



## Example 342 continued

three quarter-notes:

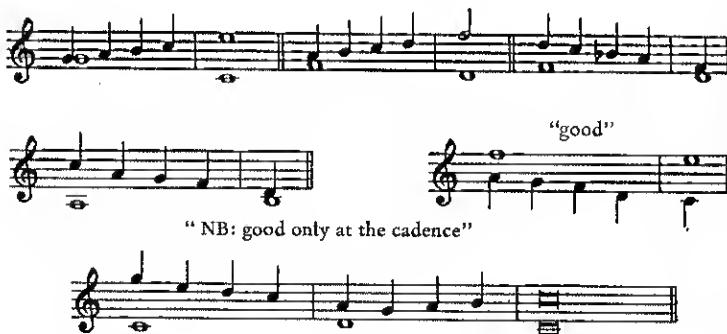


Obviously, this is the same exaggerated, in a way already fossilized and unprincipled strictness that we observed in connection with his treatment of the same problem earlier, in the second species. (Compare the remarks in Part 2, Chapter 2, §11.) And when he goes so far as to create a new field of application for the prohibition—indeed, in the relationship of second quarter to subsequent downbeat—we can endorse such aural sensitivity only to a very limited extent: under certain circumstances a parallel motion even in this relationship could strike the ear in an all too unpleasant way; it remains, nevertheless, an exaggeration to formulate the prohibition so strictly, even if only for the exercises of strict counterpoint!

## §6. A faulty third-leap

Among the contrapuntal theorists, Albrechtsberger is the only one who calls attention (on p. 44f) to the following “offense against good melody,” which occurs “when after four, or even only three, stepwise ascending notes an upward third-leap is made into the next bar; and also conversely, when a downward third-leap is made into a bar after three or four notes descending by step”—for example:

## Example 343



He continues: “Larger leaps after the same type of motion also are seldom good”—for example:

## Example 344



“good, because the chords are almost the same”

Albrechtsberger is certainly correct with this stricture. As the reason for this poor effect—unfortunately Albrechtsberger neglected to give one himself—the following should be cited: after the strong and extended succession of seconds, even the smallest leap will have to be noticed as melodically altogether too particular and individual. And sometimes, when the interval of the leap is added harmonically to the preceding tones, an unwelcome diminished chord or a seventh- or ninth-chord suddenly results. If one observes further that the leap is forbidden not in the middle of the bar but only when it leads “into a new bar,” then it is in the last analysis also the measure-boundary that exposes the poor effect of the leap, reproachable already from the melodic standpoint, also in the rhythmic domain—hence all the more glaringly.

But certainly, it depends completely on the particular situation in such a case whether contrary motion is to be recommended as the best solution; if neutrality and complete equilibrium of all tones of the counterpoint are kept in view as the unalterable final goal, then other methods will also be found to avoid such “offenses against good melody.”

Consider the following example from free composition:

## Example 345

J. S. Bach, Prelude and Fugue BWV 894 (Arpeggio-passage)



This example shows the danger of the error discussed in this paragraph. One need only insert at the bracketed place the tone *b* (as in the first figure)

after  $c^1$ , thereby creating a third-leap  $b-g^{\sharp}$ , to be convinced of the poor effect of the latter! (This is above and beyond the additional necessity in this case of expressing the  $\frac{4}{4}$ -chord [ $a-d-f$ ].

### §7. The *nota cambiata* (changing-tone figure)

Traditionally and generally, the formation called *nota cambiata* is taught in the third species.

The phenomenon represents an organic unit consisting of five tones whose course is immutably fixed; for example:

Example 346



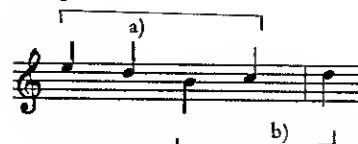
The infraction in this example of the rule of passing dissonance can be noticed immediately: the dissonance of the seventh at the second quarter, which is first introduced in compliance with the rule (that is, by step), is unfortunately left in a manner contrary to the rule (by leap) as the counterpoint moves ahead to the third quarter.

In essence, however, the offense is only apparent; for the second quarter ( $d^2$  in our example) is very well connected—connected indeed, above and beyond the interpolated third quarter, to the fourth quarter ( $c^2$ ). By virtue of this connection, the mandate of the passing second nevertheless finds its complete and just fulfillment, if only through the path of a detour.

The detour, to be sure, has its own further consequences; for the offending third quarter, as though under penalty for having delayed the immediate consummation of the seventh that entered as a passing tone, must seek its own support in the form of an absolutely consonant relationship to the *cantus firmus*; that is, it must at least be underwritten and supported by the latter through the quality of consonance if it is successfully to play the role of a delaying interloper. Moreover, the alien third quarter establishes a new base for a second, normal passing tone; for the situation it has brought about is such that the fourth quarter ( $c^2$ )—although, according to the foregoing, psychologically representing the destination, so to speak, of the first passing motion (the first, second, and fourth quarters)—itself functions simultaneously as a passing tone between the third quarter of the first bar and the downbeat of the next (i.e., between the third and fifth notes of the complete figure in our example).

Or, to put it differently: the *nota cambiata* represents two *passing-tone motions*, which, although interlocking, are nevertheless genuine and complete; see the bracketed tone-successions a and b in the following illustration:

Example 347



Each individual passing tone otherwise exhibits completely normal construction in that the dissonance is actually presented in stepwise motion. It is just that the middle tone of the second passing motion must at the same time be understood as the final tone of the first; and it is exactly this feature that produces the interlocking character and the apparent irregularity of the phenomenon.

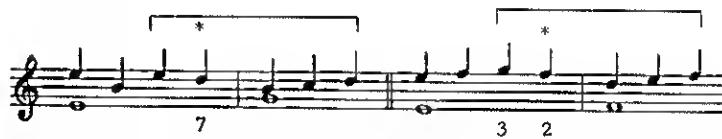
The following, then, can be viewed as prerequisites for the *nota cambiata*:

- the first quarter of the group must be consonant;
- the second quarter introduces the dissonance, which begins according to rule with a stepwise approach;
- the third quarter contains the apparently faulty third-leap, but must itself in all cases be consonant with the *cantus firmus*;
- the fourth quarter continues the stepwise descent by which the second quarter arrived, and is therefore to be heard as both endpoint of the first passing-tone motion and middle tone of the second;
- the fifth quarter, the last tone of the group, is again consonant with the *cantus firmus*.

Accordingly, the following possibilities exist:

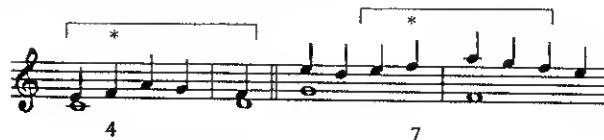
1. A genuine *nota cambiata* may also span its five-tone group from upbeat to upbeat, for example:

Example 348



2. A *nota cambiata* may be constructed equally well in the ascending direction as in the descending, for example:

Example 349



Under no circumstances, however, may phenomena such as the following count as a *nota cambiata*:

Example 350

a) \*



where the second quarter is in any case a genuine consonance, which may be left by leap at will; or this:

Example 351

b) \*



where the third quarter is not consonant with the *cantus firmus*; or:

Example 352

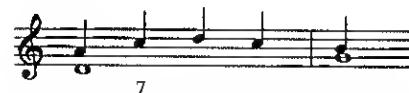
c) \*



where most of the characteristic requirements of the *nota cambiata* are satisfied, but the group begins with the second quarter, thus producing the overall impression of a certain lack of precision and transparency in comparison to the genuine *nota cambiata*; or:

Example 353

d) \*



which deviates from the genuine *nota cambiata* in that the dissonance on the second quarter, instead of being introduced by step, is approached by leap—we shall see below, in the commentary on the literature, what this actually represents—; or:

Example 354

e)



which falls two tones short of being a *nota cambiata*; the configuration instead represents a harmonic anticipation (see *Harmony*, §167)<sup>2</sup> such as is often used in recitatives, especially at the conclusion.

From the aggregate of prerequisites listed above, however, it can ultimately be inferred that the *nota cambiata*, as a unit so extensive as to embrace five tones, fundamentally stands in contradiction to strict counterpoint itself, which, as we know, invariably postulates a state of complete balance. In the strictest sense, then, it can hardly be counted as a phenomenon of strict counterpoint.

That the earlier theorists nevertheless carried over this genuine element of free composition into the domain of strict counterpoint proves only with how little care and clarity they conceived the boundary between free and strict settings.

Since the structure of the beginning of the *nota cambiata*—specifically from the first to the third tone—manifests the space of a fourth, it is not only necessary but instructive to learn to distinguish between the *nota cambiata* and the passing tone in the space of a fourth, as I have presented it above, p. 184ff.

First, let us consider passing tones. As Example 249 shows, two [different] passing tones in the space of a fourth are possible from the outset; and it is the order of the intervals by which the passing tone is approached and left that distinguishes the two forms from one another. In one case, the smaller interval of the second is executed first, and only after it the larger leap of the third, while the other case uses the reverse succession in that the third precedes the second. It is precisely the latter form, however, that produces the more natural effect. The definitive psychological reason for this is that the more distant, so to speak more strenuous, leap of a third clarifies the direction with greater accuracy, and actually brings us closer to the goal than the step of the second; the latter, indeed, leaves open the possibility that the very next tone a second removed may be the goal of the passing motion rather than the tone of the fourth, which still lies at the distance of a third. For the same reasons, then, of the two possible descending passing tones in the space of a fourth:

Example 355

a)



b)



again the form at a has the advantages of naturalness in comparison to that at b. Obviously, under certain circumstances, only the less natural form can bring forth a correspondingly marvelous effect. This is corroborated, in respect to the fourth in the ascending direction, by the previously cited Examples 250-252; for the descending direction, on the other hand, the following example may serve, whose profoundly poetic effect is based on nothing other than form b of Example 355:

Chopin, Prelude Op. 28 No. 6



The simple fact, however, that in the case of passing tones in the space of a fourth, regardless of direction, the postulate of naturalness is satisfied by having the leap of a third precede the step of a second, implies the intrinsic differences between such a passing tone and the nota cambiata, which in all cases demands the reverse order. Just this observation permits a clearer and deeper insight into the nature of the nota cambiata: it invariably adheres to the order of second followed by third, because only in this way can it express the fact that the step of a second initiates the intended normal passing-tone motion, which is completed, with the aid of a second passing-tone motion, only at the fourth quarter. The nota cambiata thus represents, to be sure, a form of passing motion, but one of such unusual and intricate construction as is not yet exhibited by the passing tone in the space of a fourth.

The heightened awareness that has here been achieved of the existence of so many and varied effects of the different forms of passing events—as such we have thus far encountered the neighboring note, the accented passing tone, the passing tone in the space of the fourth, and now also the nota cambiata—gives me an opportunity, finally, to explain further the diversified phenomena of those disjunct passing tones of which several instances (Examples 248, 253, 257, etc.) have already been cited.

Strict counterpoint totally lacks the power to make us sense in advance the coming harmony at any given point, since the force of its voice leading, in spite of all the necessity intrinsic to it, is by no means adequate for this purpose. Free composition, on the other hand, makes available such signposts to the future in the form of scale degrees and other auxiliary forces of harmonic logic. By thus sensing in advance—leaving aside possible surprises—along with the composer the coming harmony (much as we read or hear ahead when we read written matter or listen to speech), we also immediately grasp in free composition the function of those tones that bind

themselves in advance to the coming harmony as neighboring notes or accented passing tones. Beyond that, incidentally, free composition is able to bring to life in our imagination not only the immediately present concrete tonal edifice, but, far more, the total complement of constituents of the harmony in all their possible registers and octaves. Thus if we find, for example, in a passage that we recognize in advance as cadential, the following:

Example 357

Handel, Chaconne in G major, Var. II



we understand the second eighth-note c of the bass as first of all in the service of the expected V, as the neighboring note of the coming fundamental D; but besides this, our imagination independently supplies, before c, components (either B or d) of the major triad on G that is being left:

Example 358



Consequently, however—and precisely this is the result inaccessible to superficial perception—even the second eighth note, the passing tone approached by leap, embodies nothing but the original form of the passing tone itself! One sees, then, how one and the same basic phenomenon manifests itself in so many forms, yet without completely losing its identity in any of them! However much a given variant may conceal the basic form, it is still the latter alone that occasions and fructifies the new manifestation. But to reveal the basic form together with its variants, and [thereby] to uncover only prolongations of a fundamental law even where apparent contradictions hold sway—this alone is the task of counterpoint!

After the foregoing, it is obvious in an example like the following:

Example 359

J. S. Bach, WTC I, Prelude in C $\sharp$  Minor



that a passing tone in the space of a fourth is undoubtedly present in the bracketed succession; that this passing tone, however, differs completely from a *nota cambiata*; and further that it deviates from ordinary passing tones in the space of a fourth in that it places in the foreground nothing less than the effect of an anticipation.

The passage from Handel's *Messiah* chorus "And with His stripes we are healed," quoted by Bellermann on p. 162, represents a genuine *nota cambiata*:

Handel, *Messiah*

Alto

Fux teaches (p. 78ff.):

Further, a deviation from the common rule occurs when the note is changed, a case called *cambiata* by the Italians. It arises when the second, dissonant note leaps to a consonance, as can be seen in the following examples:

Example 361

Fux IV, 10

This third-leap from the second note to the third should actually take place from the first note to the second, since then the second note would form the sixth, a consonance, in the following way:

Example 362

Fux IV, 11

If it were then desired to fill out this third-leap, the result would be as follows:

Example 363

Fux IV, 12

But since the beamed notes are not available in this species of counterpoint, good authority has approved the first example, where the second note is a seventh, perhaps because the melody is more agreeable.

Such commendable effort toward investigation of the problem, and yet—alas!—in these last words, how timid the attempt at a solution! If I nevertheless reject the solution, it is for reasons of my own that have been presented in the foregoing, and because Fux's utterances appear to me not to be in accord with the intuitive feeling that he himself must have experienced on executing a *nota cambiata* in composition. Besides, my treatment of the problem provides a still broader overview encompassing several other phenomena similar to the *nota cambiata*, and offers the means to distinguish and differentiate among them.

Albrechtsberger first cites Fux, with examples expanded as follows (p. 48f.):

Example 364

He then adds the following comments of his own:

These two changing tones (*Wechselnoten*), the seventh above and the fourth below [the *cantus firmus*], are quite often found in inversion among the works of other good masters, even though in settings of three or more voices, hidden fifths are involved; for example:



where they could also have written:

Example 370

Ex. 55 4 4



In the last example there are two dissonances that occur in succession and violate the rule; this is sometimes allowed, if the dissonances move by step; sometimes one is forced by circumstances to write in such a way. But how the classical composers could justify writing dissonances by leap I do not comprehend—unless they did so for the sake of greater variety and in consideration of the short duration of the quarter notes, or finally, because the third is only a very small leap and therefore always rather easy to sing in tune.

With his wondrous thought process, Cherubini placates us really only with the confession that he has not understood the basis of the *nota cambiata*; that surely disarms any criticism! But it would have been better if Cherubini had rejected the *nota cambiata* by reason of good understanding rather than failure to understand; for in that case he would undoubtedly also have sensed the obligation of consistency, and would have spared himself the unquestionably more serious error of possibly allowing the voice leading of Example 370. In the latter, there are altogether too many licenses at one time; and if a similar idiom may elicit the most frequent application in free composition, it is nevertheless a self-deception and an obfuscation not to perceive that this idiom must then remain all the more alien to strict counterpoint. In the first place, Cherubini's example presents a combination of species, which can best be accomplished only along the path to free composition (see Part 6); further, the most primary law of the neighboring note according to strict counterpoint is violated, in that the third quarter is not once again a consonance; and finally, the dissonance of the third quarter by no means occurs between two consonances, which also must absolutely be counted as an error. Cherubini's explanation of his own example, incidentally, is inadequate: if the only requirement were that "dissonances move by step," what manner of bad voice leading would then have to be permitted under all circumstances even in exercises! The true reason Example 370 nevertheless has merit—but only for free composition, to be sure—lies rather in the following fact: the figure represents an abbreviation of two normal acts, which have been compressed into a single one; the graphic form of the first act appears as follows:

Example 371



and is to be understood as meaning that against one tone of the *cantus firmus*, four quarter-notes form a counterpoint with a neighboring note introduced in a perfectly regular way on the second quarter. The second act consists in the circumstance—to be seen later in the combined species—that the lower voice does not await the completion of all four notes, but moves ahead in advance to the next passing tone; in

doing so, it counts on the fact that our instinct, in spite of everything, is privy to the true situation. The case is similar, for example, to that of resolution of a suspension:

Example 372

a) and b)



wherein our instinct is so familiar with the suspension's innate necessity of resolution that the ear can even be further burdened by [simultaneous] advancement of the lower voice, without risk that it will become confused and fail to perceive that the origin of the phenomenon at b is to be derived from that at a, as the first act of the process. It is clear, then, that Cherubini's dispute with the "classical composers" is therefore completely insupportable in the present instance; and for the rest, it is nothing but a flight of mad fancy to believe counterpoint and compositional theory to be completely identical concepts!

*Bellermann* writes at length (p. 159) in explanation of the *nota cambiata*; only excerpts from his remarks will be quoted here:

The following practice was favored by the older composers. They considered a leap in smaller note values (quarter-notes) to be easier from a weak beat to a strong beat than vice versa. . . . They much preferred to make this leap from the second to the third quarter rather than from the first to the second, even when the second quarter thereby entered into a dissonant relationship to the other voices and, strictly by the rule, would have to proceed by step.<sup>3</sup>

And similarly again on p. 160.

This explanation is deficient, however, just because it is able at best to explain only the first three tones of the *nota cambiata*, but not the total phenomenon comprising five tones! Admittedly, *Bellermann* enlists the further aid of the following naively confused explanation (p. 160): "One finds almost without exception that the three notes following the leap again rise by step, so that use of the changing tone almost always leads to this pattern":

Example 373



But how could he defend himself against the still more damaging objection that he has, with his explanation, proclaimed as allegedly general a principle which finds no application outside the *nota cambiata* itself? Because if attention is supposed to be paid in counterpoint to "accented and less accented" notes (p. 160), as *Bellermann*'s position requires, then it is impossible to avoid the question of why, as in the *nota cambiata*, a leap from the strong to the weak beat would not have to be prohibited in all cases. Further, I call attention again to that third-leap across the bar line which was forbidden earlier—see §6! And so, in *Bellermann*'s case, we witness the following curious scene: although he comes rather close to an intuitive grasp of the phenomenon, he is not able to explain and defend it adequately, and thus, for lack of thoroughgoing

comprehension, permits himself to be carried way by completely false ideas. He allows, for example, that "the changing tone can occur just as well on the fourth quarter of the bar as on the second" [p. 160], but on the other hand feels obliged to "excuse" the changing tone that moves upward with the following words [p. 161n]: "In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the changing tone is found only in the descending direction; in modern compositions however, it can be well used even in ascending".

Example 374



He has still more to say about the changing tone: "The changing tone was treated exactly as a consonance, and even in polyphonic compositions in which one or several voices had to sing passing tones, no heed was paid to its dissonant relationship" (a quotation from a motet by Palestrina follows); then on p. 450, in paragraph 4: "The changing tone should be used only in melismas; the latter must never be broken up by [changing] syllables"—a thought which reveals clearly that Bellermann perceived the *nota cambiata* as a self-contained entity only in the form of a unit of five tones. Nevertheless, he rebuts Cherubini, in an (indeed extremely) ill-conceived polemic, with the following words (p. 161): "And doesn't more modern music exhibit very similar idioms, which, if adjusted to fit the rule as Cherubini would have it, would sound very awkward? I think for example of the idiom not uncommon in our recitatives":

Example 375



In this remark he himself again takes into account only the first three tones of the figure, as though these alone formed a complete *nota cambiata*, or, rather, as though the recitative-idiom quoted represented use of a genuine *nota cambiata* (see the explanation given above of a similar phenomenon as anticipation).

#### §8. Recollection of several earlier principles

So far as the arpeggiation of harmonies is concerned, the prohibition with which we are already acquainted (cf. Part 1, Chapter 1, §3; Part 1, Chapter 2, §19; Part 2, Chapter 2, §15) remains in effect; it is all the more necessary because the presence here of several tones within the bar makes such an arpeggiation more tempting and at the same time easier.

Special care must be taken here to ensure that dissonances are never left by leap. (Precisely in this connection, the fourth, as I have said already in §1,

plays a dangerous role!) In case of necessity, then, when there is no other solution, one can therefore write as follows:

Example 376



But never this:

Example 377



Here—on the pretext of composing out, which is always insupportable in strict counterpoint—on the third quarter a fourth occurs, which, instead of functioning as a passing tone, is both approached and left by leap.

As for *monotony*, its avoidance is now all the more imperative, since the danger of consolidation into units is still more present by virtue of the four quarters than in the preceding species.

The effect of a *change of chord* (cf. Part 2, Chapter 2, §13) can be manifested still more acutely by the third species, with its medium of four quarter-notes, than by the second. Since the harmonies in the third species can be given a more distinct shape, their succession is also more clearly perceptible; and it makes a significant difference whether a change of chord takes place from bar to bar or only within a single bar. Instruction in counterpoint therefore has the task first of calling attention to the difference of effect in the two cases; if it nevertheless goes still further and proclaims that the delineation of only one chord in each bar is initially better and more natural, that advice is founded on the fact that before the tone of the *cantus firmus* is harmonically divided, so to speak—that is, before it is assigned two different harmonies—it would have to be more appropriate to present the single tone first of all in a single harmonic environment. (Often enough, it is precisely the neighboring note that most easily aids in this task, and facilitates, better than some other note, the retention of the same harmony throughout the entire bar.) Yet one is, certainly, allowed to carry out a change of chord by means of the succession of 5 and 6; only the first bar, whose unified harmonic profile (as said already in the second species) is simply a prerequisite for comprehension of the key, must be kept free of such a procedure.

The tendency and necessity of free composition to compose out harmonies, however, and thereby to generate content, at the same time provides

a reason for the fact that within its domain, all manner of triads and seventh-chords may be arpeggiated. But in the same measure, then, in connection with composing out and the support of harmonic fundamentals, even the leap away from such a (merely apparent!) fourth<sup>4</sup> is desirable and permitted without restriction: for example:

**Example 378**

Albrechtsberger is explicit on p. 53:

The best counterpoints of two, three, or more voices in this species are those in which each bar has only a single chord type, because those counterpoints are more straightforward and more solemn (as befits the liturgical style), and can be used also in quicker tempos when necessary. Yet it is not prohibited to cause a change of chord at each beat, with the following provision: the first chord, like the last, must be perfect.<sup>5</sup> And the perfect chord is by preference retained throughout the first bar, because listeners want to be instructed, so to speak, concerning the main key, and want to be made ready for it. . . .

Here too, it would have sufficed if Albrechtsberger, instead of creating a misunderstanding by citing the "liturgical style" as a real argument, had simply endeavored to describe the effect, which is indeed different depending on whether a harmony lasts the whole bar or changes within the bar. And finally, it is unfortunate that Albrechtsberger himself deviates in one case from the principle, otherwise so strictly observed, of presenting the keys securely at the beginning: in an exercise on p. 106, he modulates to G major already in the second and third bars, where the *cantus firmus* is instead in C major.

It should be noted already in the present context that Albrechtsberger, in concluding his treatment of three-voice counterpoint (cf. pp. 113 and 114), abruptly announces:

The "NB" here [see Example 379] at the D in the bass signifies that it is not at

**Example 379**

all faulty as a weak beat, even though a  $\frac{4}{4}$ -chord is implied with it. If this bar had to be set in four voices, or to be accompanied by the organ, the octave of the first note G would be added; the second note, D, would then have the passing—or better, arpeggiating— $\frac{4}{4}$ -chord, as at No. 1 below [see example 380].

**Example 380**

No. 1

No. 2

“All good”

No. 3

Here, when the bar has four quarters, as in the third species,<sup>6</sup> the ♫-chord may be used on the third or fourth of them, when the bass arpeggiates an entire perfect chord or sixth-chord. It remains forbidden (without the use of a ligature) only on the first [quarter] note.

The author's confusion, which led him to such an inordinate admixture of strict counterpoint and free composition, is obvious for all to see. Yet I do not want to neglect, given such a fitting opportunity, to mention that the above invoked octave that the accompanying organist would be entitled and perhaps even obliged to add in the low register is nothing other than the scale degree or fundamental, as it is known only to free composition, and which there, with its own necessity, account for and justifies the content generated from within it!

## Cadence

### §9. Construction of the cadence

Since the other leading tone<sup>7</sup> must under all circumstances occur only on the fourth quarter [of the penultimate bar], the following, among others, are

available as possible cadential formulas:

Example 381

Albrechtsberger marks as "poor" (p. 51f.) the following formulas:

Example 382

As can be seen, this is because of the parallel unisons or octaves from upbeat to downbeat.

### Exercises

Example 383

Fux IV, 15 and IV, 16

Soprano

1. Alto (c. f.)

2. Tenor

Example 383 continued

Fux V, 2 and 3

Alto

3. Tenor (c. f.)

4. Bass

Example 383 *continued*

Albrechtsberger, p. 52

Alto

5. Tenor (c. f.)

6. Bass

Cherubini Ex. 61

Soprano

7. Bass

Example 383 *continued*

H. Schenker

Soprano

8. Alto c. f.

9. Tenor

n. c.

n. c.

## Comments on the Preceding Exercises

No. 1. Observe in bars 4 and 5 the added original flat sign, in spite of the Dorian mode. In bars 7 and 8, on the contrary, evidently because of the approach of the cadence, Fux avoids a similar use of a flat sign; as a result, however, he commits the error of two [successive] major thirds in bars 8–9—about which more detail has been given in Part 2, Chapter 1, §18. It is not without irony that Bellermann, who cites this Fux exercise on p. 165, uses the  $B\flat$  instead of the Dorian  $B\sharp$  in bars 7 and 8 as well—what becomes then of the Dorian system, in which Bellermann certainly believes (cf. Bellermann, p. 49)?

No. 3. The  $B\flat$  in bar 3 is original, in spite of the Lydian mode; Bellermann, however, who also reproduces this exercise, removes the flat sign; thus he here does the opposite to what he did in the first exercise. In bar 9, Fux's counterpoint can hardly be called fluent and good; Bellermann is justified in changing it as follows:

## Example 384



No. 5. In bar 6 the arpeggiation of the C triad makes a thoroughly poor effect. Bar 8 exhibits the figure discussed in more detail in §7. The parallel fifths on the strong beats in bars 8–9 are, under the circumstances, not to be condemned.

No. 6. Bars 1–2 yield a deadly, inexcusable monotony in their relationship to bars 3–4. In bar 5, the tone  $F$  is no neighboring note, although the  $D$  in bar 6 is, and likewise the  $G$  of bar 9. Bar 12 shows an arpeggiation of a triad (cf. Exercise 5).

No. 7. This exercise shows modulations in bars 6 and 9, and a neighboring note in bar 3.

*Chapter 4*The Fourth Species:  
Syncopation

## General Aspects

§1. *The concept of syncopation*

If in strict counterpoint based on a binary division of the bar (compare the second species) a *consonant* note on an upbeat is extended into the following downbeat, which is indicated specifically through *connection* by means of a tie, the resulting phenomenon is called *syncopation*; for example:

## Example 385



Strict counterpoint emphasizes, however, that the note on the upbeat must always consonate with the *cantus firmus*. Thus, for reasons that will be revealed later, it excludes from its domain at the outset any case in which the note of the upbeat forms a dissonance that, although obviously first conceived as a passing tone, is nevertheless turned into a syncope by means of tying; for example:

## Example 386



The following example from free composition shows the same thing:

## Example 387

Beethoven, Piano Sonata Op. 110, Fuga

A-flat major: II - V - III - VI<sup>4</sup>/<sub>3</sub> -

We shall see later, to be sure, the circumstances under which even strict counterpoint itself, daring a first step toward free composition, nevertheless permits a dissonance at the upbeat:  $\frac{4}{4} \mid \frac{3}{3}$ .

Fux (p. 80) defines syncope as "two half-beats (*halbe Schläge*) against a whole beat such that the two half-beats remain in place and have a tie over them; the first must be on the *arsis*, the second on the *thesis*."

Albrechtsberger's correction of an error by Beethoven (Nottebohm, p. 50):

## Example 388

B. A.

4

confirms strict counterpoint's immutable requirement of consonance at the upbeat.

Cherubini writes (p. 22): "Syncope is the name given a whole-note whose first half lies on the weak beat, and whose second half lies on the strong beat of the following bar"; thus:

## Example 389

Ex. 62

or also:

Bellermann erroneously takes up the further development of the syncopation concept somewhat prematurely in that, even as he introduces the discussion, he speaks of the dissonant syncopation in particular, and then forms the general concept. Only later, on p. 174, does he correct the error—only by accident, as it were: "The note that is tied to this on the *arsis* [= downbeat] is either a consonance or a dissonance. . . ."

## §2. Classification of syncopes

If the principle of syncopation—that is, the continuation of the consonant note of the upbeat into the following downbeat—remains always the same, the material content of the syncope, on the contrary, can be further differentiated. Specifically, in spite of [the immutable requirement of] tying and consonance on the upbeat, the interval that arrives at the downbeat may be consonant or even dissonant, and for this reason we speak of *consonant* and *dissonant syncopes* (*ligatura consonans*, *dissonans*):

## Example 390

5 7

Strict counterpoint unquestionably allows both types.

Still, if the consonant syncope, in spite of its different external appearance, obviously belongs to the same family as the other consonant phenomena observed in strict counterpoint up to now, the *dissonant syncope* on the contrary offers a completely new technical and psychological principle: in it, by contrast with the single dissonance passing through on the upbeat and, indeed, between two consonances (the only one permitted so far), we at last encounter—for the very first time in strict counterpoint!—a *dissonance on the strong beat*. The new prerequisites and effects presented by the latter will be treated in detail shortly.

## §3. The consonant syncope

Once the mechanism of a consonant syncope (consonance on both upbeat and downbeat) appears immutably fixed, all that remains is to form a clear notion of its continuation. And this is very easy to describe in strict counterpoint. For if, according to the principle of the present species, a consonance must always be placed on the upbeat, then motion away from the consonant syncope must always lead to another consonance, whether by step or by leap.

Apart from the fact that the new consonance on the upbeat becomes itself the basis for the next syncope, it now enters either (a) as a third party along with the *cantus firmus* and the note of the preceding strong beat to express the same harmony, or (b) as a second party with the *cantus firmus* alone to produce, necessarily, a change of harmony (cf. Part 2, Chapter 2, §13 and Part 2, Chapter 3, §8). The latter, as we know, is possible only with the successions  $\tilde{5}-6$  or  $\tilde{6}-5$ :

## Example 391

a)

b)

5 3 5 8 5 6 6 5

Moreover, especially in extended use of consonant syncopations, wherever possible the old rule should be applied, according to which an imperfect consonance is more desirable on the strong beat than a perfect (cf. Part 2, Chapter 1, §22).

Finally it should be noted that the unison, too, can appear in a series of consonant syncopations. More about this later.

Although Fux does not speak explicitly about them, Albrechtsberger (pp. 57-58) says: "The consonance-ligatures may move at their resolution [sic!] either by leap or by step to another consonance; but the latter mode of progression can apply only to the perfect fifth and the two permitted sixths":

## Example 392

a)

b)

6 5 6 5 6 5 6 5 6 5 6 5

(Examples follow also of continuation by leap.)

It should not be overlooked, however, that in the example just cited he initially pays no further attention to fifth-successions, since he has set on the downbeat at a and on the upbeat at b as many as three fifths in succession.

#### §4. The nature of the dissonant syncope

If we compare the dissonant syncope with the phenomenon, familiar from the second species, of the passing dissonance, we are surprised to find that they have a common characteristic, namely, that in both, the dissonant element is situated only between two consonances!

The phenomena of strict counterpoint under comparison here are in fact made more similar to each other by this characteristic than they are differentiated from each other by the circumstance that in the syncope the two consonances enclosing the dissonance in the middle position are placed on upbeats, while in the passing dissonance they are placed on downbeats:

## Example 393

cons. diss. cons.

5 6 5 6 5 6 5

And their similarity is in no way canceled by the fact that in the syncope, the dissonant note of the downbeat is identical to the so-called consonant *preparation* on the upbeat, while in the passing dissonance, upbeat and downbeat must exhibit different tones.

In both phenomena the essential course of events—cf. Part 2, Chapter 1, §2, and Part 2, Chapter 2, §6!—is the same:

*Consonance—Dissonance—Consonance!*

In this light even the dissonant syncope is fundamentally nothing but a type of passing dissonance, a part of the general problem of dissonance altogether, which in the realm of strict counterpoint therefore includes, along with the passing dissonance on the weak beats (second and third species), also the passing dissonance on the strong beat, specifically the dissonant syncope (fourth species).

Fux is the only theorist who, although chiefly concerned with another problem, at least made an effort at the same time to explain the inner nature of the dissonant syncope (p. 80):

Since dissonances come about here not accidentally or as a result of filling out [a larger interval] (*per diminutionem*) as in earlier species but, rather, essentially and on the downbeat, and since they have no attraction in and of themselves (as they strike the ear rather in an annoying way) but derive their beauty [*Wohklang*] from the immediately following consonance to which they are resolved, the subject of resolution of dissonances must now be treated.

(Compare the citation in §15 below.) Thus we find here already an inkling that even the dissonance of the syncope, just like that of the simple passing tone on the weak beat, is to be grasped only from the standpoint of consonance!

#### §5. The law of downward resolution of the dissonant syncope in strict counterpoint and the limitations it imposes on the types of syncopes

The dissonant syncope in strict counterpoint must always be led *downward by step* to the nearest consonance.

The following table presents first of all every possible dissonant syncope:

## Example 394

A) in the upper counterpoint

a) with descending stepwise resolution

1. — 2. 3. NB. 4. 5. NB.

3 2 1 9 8 4 3 7 6 5 4

b) with ascending stepwise resolution

1. 2. 3. 4.

2 3 9 10 4 5 7 8

B) in the lower counterpoint

a) with descending stepwise resolution

1. 2. NB. 3. 4. NB.

7 8 4 5 4 5 2 3 9 10

b) with ascending stepwise resolution

1. 2. 3. 4.

9 8 2 1 4 3 7 6

All syncopes under A, b and B, b, however, are excluded at the outset from use in strict counterpoint.

"NB" above A, a 3 and B, a 2 is to indicate that the *augmented fourth* in both upper and lower counterpoints, so long as the paths of the syncopes in a strictly maintained diatony are not blocked off, must be allowed to appear without restriction even in strict counterpoint. In this matter—as remarked already in Part 2, Chapter 1, §3—one must consciously, if also reluctantly, take into account the artificial organization of diatony.

"NB" above A, a 5 refers to the fact that in itself, even the *diminished fifth* could be regarded as a dissonant syncope, if the requirement of downward resolution did not call attention to the insurmountable obstacle of the dissonant fourth, as an insupportable resolution.

Now to the most difficult aspect of the subject, namely the *reason* for the rule according to which only a downward resolution is admitted in strict counterpoint.

If we consider an example of free composition, like the following:

## Example 395

Beethoven, Piano Sonata Op. 13, I

Grave

C minor: 1 — IV — V — I

we find that a number of factors cause us fully to expect in advance—just according to the logic of the harmonies—the C triad (in  $\frac{5}{3}$  position) that arrives at the third quarter of bar 2. Contributing to this expectation is the presence of scale degrees (see *Harmony*, §84) together with the composed-out entities that result from them, as well as the development of richer devices of polyphony. Consequently, given the clarity of the total situation, we then must sense perfectly correctly the function of all of the tones conceived as suspension formations, such as  $b - c^1$ ,  $d^1 - e^1$  and  $a^1 - g$ ; these tones represent either (from the standpoint of the scale degree C itself) the suspensions  $\sim 7 - 8$ ,  $\sim 2 - 3$ , and  $\sim 6 - 5$  respectively, or (from the standpoint of the tone  $E^1$ , as bass note of the sixth-chord) the suspensions  $\sim 5 - 6$ ,  $\sim 7 - 8$ , and  $\sim 4 - 3$  respectively.

Because of its lack of scale degrees and its very considerable reduction of other resources, two-voice texture in strict counterpoint is unable to offer any possibility of attaining an equally desirable clarity concerning the function of the syncopes that arise in its milieu. But precisely the fact that downward resolution of dissonant syncopes was used in practice and justified in theory at a very early time—in fact, long before composers had learned to fructify the horizontal dimension through harmonies, to elevate the harmonies to the rank of scale degrees, and finally to bind the latter together as diatony and as system—makes it our obligation today to seek the reason for this rule (cf. Part 2, Chapter 1, §12!) only in the causes and effects of strict counterpoint itself!

Compare with Example 395 the following:

## Example 396

a) J. S. Bach, French Suite No. 1, Sarabande      b) J. S. Bach, English Suite No. 3, Sarabande

Here too, in both cases, it is the tonic that we fully expect in bar 2 under both a and b—indeed, after the preceding V in the first bar of both examples; and therefore the contributions of the harmonic components of the I are welcome and comprehensible, regardless of how they are brought in, even if it be by means of ascending or descending suspensions:

And similarly:<sup>2</sup>

## Example 397

Mozart, Piano Sonata K. 333, I

On the other hand, if we consider any arbitrarily selected tone within the course of a two-voice exercise, for example the tone  $c^1$ , strict counterpoint cannot explain what this tone  $c^1$  might be—whether a scale degree itself, or a harmonic component of one, or perhaps just a passing tone within some scale degree, or something else. Therefore, dissonant phenomena such as the following:

## Example 398

whose ancestry and significance in a given place could be explained to the last detail by free composition, must remain unsolvable riddles in strict counterpoint, and no device (cf. Part 2, Chapter 1, §2) would be able here to

help us crack these riddles. Strict counterpoint, then, in order to lend at least *some* kind of interpretation to the tone, invokes the only means available to it, namely consonance. Since it can by no means certify the dissonance as independent, under such duress it provides the tone in each case with the consonance that is only fitting.

I call attention once again in this context to the idea expressed on p. 153, and I repeat here: consonance signifies the *a priori* principle in the tonal universe. After all, strictly speaking, consonance adds to a tone only that which the tone carries within its own bosom by nature in the form of the overtone series, regardless of whether the particular interval is an octave, fifth, third, or only the artificial inversions of those (unison, fourth, sixth)!

Thus the tone  $c^1$ , to return to our example, must first, under all circumstances, acquire its consonance, before dissonances such as 7, 9, 4, 2, etc. (see Example 398) can pass above or below it. In the most fundamental sense of strict counterpoint, then, there can be only the following passing tones:

## Example 399

A) in the upper counterpoint

1. the 7th:

a) b) 7

2. the 4th:

a) b) 4

3. the 9th:

a) b) 9

4. the 2nd:

a) b) 2

B) in the lower counterpoint

5. the 2nd:

a) b) 2

Example 399 *continued*

6. the 4th:

a)

b)

7. the 7th:

a)

b)

With this let it be once again most emphatically established that in strict counterpoint there logically can be no *fundamental* and endemic way to introduce a dissonance on the downbeat—that is, just on the head of the cantus-firmus [tone].

Yet strict counterpoint does undertake, given a preceding definite consonance, to place a dissonance on the strong beat, as an act of force, so to speak. This act of force consists in a *conflating* of two situations which were originally separate.

Specifically, in the *first* stage of this process (consider the following example):

## Example 400

the consonant beginning (c<sup>1</sup>) of the passing motion is deleted (see the parentheses), whereby an appeal is justifiably made to our instinct, which here is able to supply on its own the necessary consonance on the downbeat.<sup>3</sup> Therefore the passing dissonance can be moved forward, onto the unoccupied downbeat, so that the passing tone as such apparently ceases to exist.

In the *second* stage, the sacrificed consonance of the downbeat finds a substitute at least in the consonance of the upbeat of the preceding measure. The mark of this substitution is the tie, which, to be sure, presupposes *identity* of the preceding consonances with the dissonant tone. By this means, finally, the so-called syncope of a seventh is produced:

## Example 401

7

## The Fourth Species: Syncopation

among others. This phenomenon shows a stricter form than the accented passing tone and the free suspension, which will be discussed later.

If the phenomenon of the syncope is thus to be understood only as a product of abbreviation—the first *elliptical* process in strict counterpoint itself—then it is also possible to answer the question of why the dissonant syncope in strict counterpoint must always be resolved downward. For if the tied dissonance is from the outset only a passing dissonance, then the basic rule of the dissonant passing tone remains fully as applicable here as before, specifically, that the direction of motion by which it arrived (cf. Part 2, Chapter 2, §4) be maintained. In the light of this, then, the answer to the question just posed depends upon which *direction* of passing motion (see Example 399) should be assumed in the case of a seventh, fourth, ninth, and so forth. This means that if we argue, in the case of the seventh, for example, for the passing motion as seen in Example 399 at 1a, then the seventh, as a passing tone coming from above, must continue downward; but if we gave preference to the other passing tone, as seen at 1b, the seventh would then have to continue its upward path; and so on, *mutatis mutandis*, for all the remaining dissonant syncopes.

Nothing is simpler, however, than to answer this latter basic and preliminary question, if we begin with the only logical point of view. It is, specifically, that in the absence of any more exact orientation concerning the meaning of the cantus-firmus tone, the latter must be supplied with the fullest possible, or most *definitive*, measure of consonance, so as to shape at least the brief moment of consonance-effect for the tone in the most satisfactory way.

So far as suspensions in the *upper counterpoint* are concerned, in deciding our preliminary question about the point of departure for the passing seventh—see Example 399, 1a and b—our instinct prefers the octave to the sixth, simply for the reason that the former interval (cf. Part 1, Chapter 2, §11) is more natural than the latter, which is only a product of inversion, and, ultimately, even points to a different fundamental:

## Example 402

For the passing *fourth*—see Example 399, 2a and b—the fifth is more suitable than the third as point of departure of the passing tone, because the former draws the boundary of consonance of the fundamental better than the latter.

Since in the case of the *ninth*—see 3a and b—we must choose between third and octave, we decide in favor of the third, which provides more harmony to the lower tone than the octave. For the same reason, in the case of the *second*—see 4a and b—we prefer the third to the unison.

In the *lower counterpoint* the question of the beginning of the passing tone for the *second*—see 5a and b—is decided in favor of the unison, for the reason that it at least fits into the characteristic harmony of the tone *c* itself,

while the lower third *a* deprives the *c* of its roothood-tendency by reducing it to the status of a third.

The lower fifth expresses still more drastically than the lower third the complete loss of roothood-tendency of the given tone *c*<sup>1</sup>, and therefore in the case of the passing *fourth* in the lower counterpoint—see 6a and b—we decide for the third in preference to the fifth.

The passing *seventh*—see 7a and b—, from the standpoint of quantity of harmony, is better imagined as beginning with the lower sixth than with the octave: the latter interval, at least, is the inversion of the upper third! (For the seventh in the upper counterpoint, however, the upper sixth was rejected, precisely because it is the inversion of the lower third.)

As the point of departure of the passing tones has finally been decided for the absolute reasons cited—specifically, 8 before 7, 5 before 4, 10 before 9, and 3 before 2 in the upper counterpoint; 1 before 2, 3 before 4, and 6 before 7 in the lower—, at the same time the direction of the passing tone is established; as we see, it is a *descending* passing tone.

Selection of the other departure-points would, on the contrary, necessarily have suggested an ascending direction for the passing tone; although the other departure-points are certainly possible *per se*, just here, in strict counterpoint, they had to be rejected. In any case, this much is clear: dissonant syncopes with ascending resolutions are peripheral to the problem under consideration; therefore strict counterpoint can refer to them only as, in a sense, more distant relatives, which have their place only in free composition. There, under the aegis of scale degrees (which clarify all relationships from the start), they can manifest their characteristic passing effect and expressive value all the more effectively and securely.

Let us finally solve this problem definitively on the basis of strict counterpoint: if the postulate of descending resolution of dissonant syncopes establishes at once the path of three tones, from precisely that fact we can see the reason that, as mentioned in §1 above, [in the fourth species] only a consonant character must always be demanded of the note on the upbeat. For suppose it were permitted in strict counterpoint to place a dissonance in passing also on the upbeat. In such a case one would have to arrive at a unified formation comprising two full bars (see Example 386a), because, regardless of the dissonant passing tone, the dissonance of the syncopation now demands for its own part a fixed continuation. But wouldn't such an extensive and, by its lack of motivation, moreover incomprehensible formation stand in contradiction to the uppermost postulate of strict counterpoint—that of maximum neutrality of the tones? If one tried to avoid such a danger perhaps by suddenly turning the syncopation into a consonance (as in Example 386b), wouldn't one be guilty in that case of a transgression against another crucial prescription by abruptly and arbitrarily depriving the dissonance, conceived as passing tone, of its natural and proper downward motion?

Among all of the teachers, *Fux* is the only one who at least acknowledges for the student the problem of the prohibition of upward resolution as such. On p. 80 we read:

Before I begin to explain how dissonances are to be resolved, it must be said that a tied note is nothing but a delaying of the following note, which then, as though liberated from its servitude, again finds itself in a free condition. For this reason, dissonances are always to be resolved downward by step to the nearest consonance, as is seen clearly in the following example:

## Example 403

Fux V, 6



When the delaying process is removed, this figure appears as follows:

## Example 404

Fux V, 7



This reveals that it can easily be understood which consonance any dissonance is to be resolved to: namely, that which is found at the downbeat of the following bar once the delaying process is eliminated. Thus it happens that when the *cantus firmus* lies below, the second will have to be resolved to the unison, the fourth to the third, the seventh to the sixth, and the ninth to the octave.

And moreover, on p. 81:

*Joseph*: . . . With your permission, I should like to ask whether the delaying or tying of dissonances occurs also with the ascending motion? For the following examples appear to be essentially the same:

## Example 405

Fux V, 15



*Aloys*: You raise a question that is harder to untangle than the Gordian knot—one which you, as a beginner in this discipline, cannot understand, and which, therefore, will be taken up in another context. Regarding whether the thirds indeed remain the same both rising and falling after the delaying is eliminated, as said, it will be explained at the proper time that some difference is present. In the meantime, you must believe me, as your teacher, that all dissonances must be resolved by descending to the nearest consonance.

*Albrechtsberger* does not attempt to justify the prescription of downward (or prohibition of upward) resolution under discussion; he rather simply decrees the rule

as self-explanatory (p. 57) and adds only this: "It is certainly well known that the diminished fifth in all settings tends to resolve downward to the third; but here this cannot occur immediately, at least not in the upper voice. When it [the diminished fifth] is tied there, the minor third or minor sixth must be struck at the upbeat, before [it resolves]"; for example:

Example 406

Compare the voice leading in Albrechtsberger, p. 103, in an exercise of three-voice counterpoint:

Example 407

And finally an excerpt from a Beethoven exercise (see Nottebohm, p. 52), approved by Albrechtsberger expressly as a "license":

Example 408

Here the diminished fifth even appears to be resolved in a different voice.

As can be inferred from this, Albrechtsberger admits as a dissonant syncope the diminished fifth as well, even though its resolution necessarily comprises two full bars. Just this fact, however, provides us with sufficient reason to exclude this syncope, which leads to such a broad unified formation, from the domain of strict counterpoint and consign it instead to free composition.

On pp. 75-78 and 100f. he shows—in a disorganized manner, to be sure, because only among other things—also the upward resolution of dissonant syncopes  $\sim 2-3$ ,  $\sim 7-8$  [in the upper counterpoint],  $\sim 7-6$ ,  $\sim 9-8$  [in the lower] for use in free composition.

Concerning the augmented fourth, see the citations below in §9.

Bellermann's citation concerning the augmented fourth is in §§9 and 10.

**§6. Certain syncopes which, even though they resolve downward, are either entirely prohibited or only tolerated**

Even syncopes that are given downward resolutions—see above, A, a and B, a—are subjected to a further reduction for the purpose of strict counterpoint: despite their downward resolution, one among them is altogether prohibited, and several others are only tolerated. To be specific,  $\sim 7-8$  in the lower counterpoint is prohibited, while others are more or less tolerated:  $\sim 2-1$  and  $\sim 9-8$  in the upper counterpoint and  $\sim 4-5$  in the lower counterpoint. The reasons for this restriction are now to be discussed in detail.

**§7. The total prohibition of the  $\sim 7-8$  syncope in the lower counterpoint**

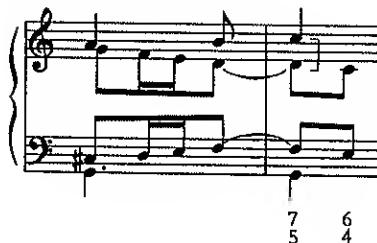
The prohibition of the  $\sim 7-8$  syncope in the lower counterpoint is based on the fact that the passing motion whose middle tone (see above, §5) is the seventh begins with the sixth below [the cantus firmus].

Among all the consonances which can initiate a passing motion—octave, fifth and third (or tenth) before the seventh, fourth and second (or ninth) in the upper counterpoint, and unison, lower third and lower sixth before the second, lower fourth and lower seventh in the lower counterpoint—the lower sixth, as is evident, represents without doubt the least appropriate initial interval. Consider that we arrive at the lower sixth only by way of the inversion of the upper third (which by itself shows the questionable derivative quality of the former interval with sufficient clarity); and consider, further, that in strict counterpoint the syncope of the lower seventh is in danger of being mistaken for the syncope of the upper seventh (especially as in the latter case we can easily posit the very propitious interval of an octave as point of departure for the passing motion); these two reasons explain our instinctual resistance to following the path of inversion or to giving preference to the lower sixth over the octave. In other words: it is difficult, even impossible, for us to posit directly the lower sixth; this, however, is absolutely necessary in the case of syncopation (according to §5) if we want to determine the direction of the passing motion. Strict counterpoint, therefore, lacks all means to compel us to accept the lower sixth, and this eliminates the  $\sim 7-8$  syncope in the lower counterpoint.

The conditions for this syncope are completely different, however, and far more favorable, in free composition. There, we intuitively follow the logic of the scale-degree progression; just for that reason, since we are entitled to expect one or another harmony, we are also able under certain circumstances to interpret at once the downward-resolving suspended seventh of the lower voice as a suspension of the octave of the expected harmony. Moreover, in free composition such a syncope can, without being misinterpreted, even occur between an inner voice and an upper voice:

## Example 409

Schubert, Piano Sonata Op. 42, II



regardless of the fact that, measured from the fundamental, the intervals would be different. Thus in the above Schubert example, the syncopes would represent either  $\frac{7}{4} - \frac{5}{4}$ , if the tone C itself (scale degree I) were to be considered the fundamental, or  $\frac{7}{3} - \frac{6}{4}$ , if the  $\frac{4}{3}$ -position of the harmony were to be taken into account.

Fux devotes the following passage to this difficult question (p. 81f):

Aloys: I must confess that I deliberately omitted the seventh. Hardly any reason can be cited here except the authority of great masters, to which we must always pay attention in practical matters. Almost none can be found who used the seventh resolving to the octave in this way:

## Example 410

Fux V, 13



One might say that the seventh so resolved cannot be tolerated because the octave to which it moves is a perfect consonance, from which it can derive little harmony, if it were not for the fact that these same masters often resolve the second (which is the seventh in inversion) to the unison, from which a dissonance can derive even less harmony, since it is the most perfect consonance. I maintain that one must follow the usage of renowned masters in this matter. Here is an example of the inverted seventh, or second:

## Example 411

Fux V, 14



## The Fourth Species: Syncopation

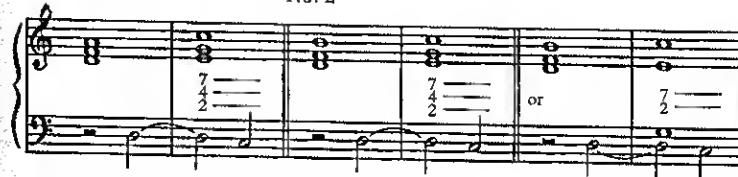
It is always a serious mistake, as I have stated repeatedly, to call upon the practice of the masters in free composition to decide problems in strict counterpoint. Even more surprising, however, is that Fux nevertheless uses this very  $\frac{7}{8}$  syncope in the lower counterpoint in an exercise (Table VI, Figure 1; see below, Exercise 4), apparently only to avoid doing violence to the melodic line.

Albrechtsberger, if only subconsciously, comes closer to the truth than Fux when he writes, "[Fux] forbids the resolution of the lower seventh to the octave, which in two-voice counterpoint is a very appropriate prohibition; but it is well-known that other famous composers have often used it as a suspension to a complete chord in multi-voiced compositions; for example":

## Example 412

No. 1

No. 2



Albrechtsberger expresses here his intuitive notion that it is only two-voice counterpoint itself that causes the restriction; admittedly, he is not able to express this idea with greater precision.

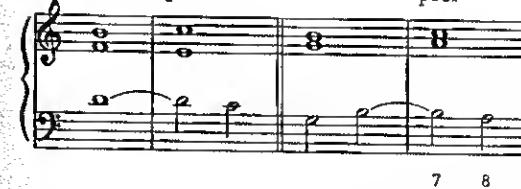
While Fux and Albrechtsberger approve of the syncope  $\frac{7}{8}$  in the lower counterpoint at least in free composition (even though they are not yet able to gain clarity about why it is permitted there but prohibited in strict counterpoint), Bellermann commits the gravest error that can be committed by a theorist, in that he extends the prohibition also to free composition (p. 216):

The inversion of the ninth—that is, a seventh prepared in the lower voice which would resolve to the octave—is, because of its rough sound, prohibited not only in a cappella composition but generally in any kind of polyphonic music that conforms to rules.

## Example 413

poor

poor



By the same token, the situation just described also must not occur between two inner voices, even though similar things can occasionally be found in smaller note values in the works of the best masters. Compare the four-part motet "Dies sanctificatus" (No. 1 of the first book of four-part motets) by Palestrina, bar 16. Such occasional exceptions, however, are not to be imitated, and have no influence whatever on the stricter rule.

Such a wretched abuse of theory! It is all the more reprehensible as the author's perception did not even suffice to recognize the effect of the prohibited syncope as beautiful and good in free compositions; it thus remains in arrears vis à vis indisputable facts of the tonal world, which find their justification in the beautiful effect so attained! I almost fear that Bellermann invented the "rough sound" in order to find some way to motivate the restriction.

**§8. The necessity of restricting the use of: (a) The  $\sim 2-1$  and  $\sim 9-8$  syncopes in the upper counterpoint**

Use of the syncopes  $\sim 2-1$  and  $\sim 9-8$  is best restricted in counterpoint, for the following reasons:

First, the resolution leads to perfect consonances, in particular the unison and the octave, that are less appropriate in counterpoint.

Second, because of those consonances, greater caution must be used with regard to voice leading (cf. later, §15); this leads necessarily to a certain inconvenience in the practical execution of the exercises.

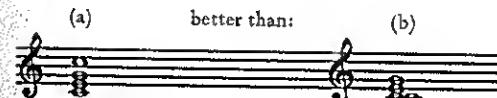
It should be stated now, however, that an important law originates from these syncopes that are to be used only in moderation; it is the law of the *identity of the tone of resolution*. Since unison and octave are identical with the tone of the cantus firmus, the above-mentioned syncopes really lead back, even though by way of a dissonance, to the tone of the cantus firmus. What damage this fact must cause in other difficult circumstances will be demonstrated later in parts 3 and 4.

Leaving aside the restriction [of these syncopes] in counterpoint, we are obliged nevertheless to distinguish clearly the two syncopes mentioned here as two completely different phenomena. Thus it is not permissible in strict counterpoint to consider  $\sim 2-1$  merely a  $\sim 9-8$  syncope transposed down an octave. Decisive for the distinction is only the voice-leading in the exercises themselves; here the intervals  $\sim 2-1$  or  $\sim 9-8$  simply have to be taken literally, precisely in the way they occur in the voice leading!

We will see later that most theorists tend to understand  $\sim 2-1$  as contained in  $\sim 9-8$ —that is, to deny the independent quality of a  $\sim 2-1$  syncope. The reason for the difference of opinion appears to me to lie in the following. Theorists promise in their introductions to base the exercises of counterpoint on a purely vocal foundation, and accordingly teach [the necessity of] a proper distance between the voices; later on, however, they unconsciously abandon their original (and correctly conceived) intention in order to be able to equate (that is, confuse) counterpoint with free composition: under the influence of the latter, they already use in exercises voice-spacings that can no longer be understood as vocal but only as instrumental. But if theorists decided to explain intervals beyond the tenth, for example, such as 11, 12, 13, 14, by suggesting to themselves as well as to their students that these intervals are not what they appear to be but rather 4, 5, 6, 7 merely transposed up an octave; or, put differently, if the distance between two voices

is taken only figuratively and not in its literal reality, then, of course, a theoretical vacillation must arise concerning the syncopes  $\sim 2-1$  and  $\sim 9-8$ . Then one must ask: Is  $\sim 9-8$  really  $\sim 9-8$  or perhaps only  $\sim 2-1$ ; and, vice versa, is  $\sim 2-1$  also something different from  $\sim 2-1$ ? That teachers in this predicament decided in favor of assuming one single syncope  $\sim 9-8$  and abandoning the  $\sim 2-1$  can be explained on two grounds. First, they viewed the interval of the octave in counterpoint as a more suitable consonance than the unison (especially in three- and four-voice counterpoint where the octave can have a better harmonic effect than the unison). This point of view, which belongs to the realm of strict counterpoint itself, certainly cannot be disputed; the second point, however, which is invalidly derived from free composition, must be rejected all the more emphatically. The aural image of triads, which, in the name of scale degrees of free composition, always lives within us, leads quite naturally to the acceptance of the octave rather than the unison as an interval of further reinforcement; in other words, in free composition we expect the harmony C-E-G, for example, to appear in the form at a rather than at b in Example 414.

**Example 414**



In this case, too, we are inclined to view as more compelling the octave, whose better quality has already been certified by the overtone series. Nevertheless, it is unjustified to transfer this inclination to counterpoint, where the decisive factor is voice leading alone, not scale degrees and other elements of reinforcement. Therefore, in the given situation—that is, when it is required by voice-leading— $\sim 2-1$  had to be used without hesitation; and if, according to principles of counterpoint alone, it is justified to consider the unison inferior to the octave, and thus to regard the syncope that resolves to the unison as likewise inferior, then we may draw as a consequence [of this] only the distinction between "superior" and "inferior" in a purely contrapuntal sense; we may not for this reason alone deny the contrapuntally independent quality of the "inferior" syncope. In other words: anyone who insists most strictly on the vocal foundation in the execution of exercises, and, thus, is accustomed to regard the distance between voices as an irrefutable reality, must also view  $\sim 9-8$  as something materially completely different from  $\sim 2-1$ , regardless of the fact that, for the reasons presented here, he will prefer the former syncope to the latter, and, for the rest, will find it best to limit the use of both syncopes only to cases of greatest necessity.

Despite scale degrees, free composition does not abandon the principles of voice-leading altogether; therefore it remains true even here that  $\sim 2-1$

and  $\sim 9-8$  certainly represent different phenomena, depending on whether they function—again only in terms of voice leading—as suspensions to the fundamental or to the octave, as for example here:

Example 415

J. S. Bach, French Suite No. 2, Sarabande

to E♭ major: II ————— V ————— I

The phenomenon of  $\sim 2-1$  at the asterisk is not canceled by the fact that the lower voice moves away during the resolution of the syncope (cf. Part 6).

From the passage (already quoted in §7) that Fux devotes to the  $\sim 7-8$  syncope [in the lower counterpoint], one can at least infer that he appears to recognize the independent quality of the  $\sim 2-1$  syncope and does not want it confused with  $\sim 9-8$ .

Albrechtsberger, on the other hand, expressly denies the independence in the upper counterpoint of the  $\sim 2-1$  syncope, which he regards as assimilated by the  $\sim 9-8$  syncope. Thus he writes on p. 57: "Seconds always resolve in the contrapuntal lower voice down a half- or whole-step to thirds." This means that he does not recognize the syncope of a second in the upper voice. Moreover, on p. 58 we find the following figured-bass notation:

Example 416

NB

9 8 or 9 8

that is, the same figure for  $\sim 9-8$  and  $\sim 2-1$  together with an NB remark which becomes completely clear only when we read Albrechtsberger's explanation on p. 16t.

The second is resolved in the lower voice to the third, and in the upper voice to the unison. It is always erroneous to figure the latter in compositions for three or more parts—for example:

Example 417

instead of: 9 8

9 8

the same: 9 8

incorrectly figured: 2 1

Example 417 continued

a due

incorrectly figured      acceptable

I have touched upon this point already in my discussion of fourth-species two-voice counterpoint in the context of dissonant ligatures in the upper voice; I repeat it here once more so that aspiring composers are not misled by many an erroneous figure. They should keep in mind that the second-ligature can never be figured [as such] in settings of three or more voices if the ligature or delay is contained in the upper voice, but only if it is in the lower voice, which, being a half- or whole-step below [the upper voice], is delayed by means of a ligature and resolves downward to the minor or major third. The ninth is indeed literally identical to the second above, but not in accompaniment and resolution. [Compare also p. 104ff.]

We read something similar in Bellermann (p. 173), who in this case abandons the Fuxian trail: "The ninth is therefore a second which, depending on the distance between its elements, resolves to the octave or the unison . . . etc." (Compare also later on p. 215). Soon thereafter he remarks: "The ninth has not been used so frequently as the other dissonant intervals. In two-voice counterpoint it really should be avoided completely." Such a statement about [musical] practice can hardly be considered a satisfactory rationale for his assumption that  $\sim 2-1$  and  $\sim 9-8$  are identical.

### §9. (b) The $\sim 4-5$ syncope in the lower counterpoint

The  $\sim 4-5$  syncope in the lower counterpoint has a value similarly inferior to the syncopes just discussed; when we consider that this syncope is based on the passing motion  $3-4-5$  (whereby, unfortunately, the third is only the lower third), we immediately understand that our instinct prefers under all circumstances the syncope of a fourth in the upper counterpoint, which originates from a much more favorable passing motion, namely  $5-4-3$ . Moreover, since in the  $\sim 4-5$  syncope the interval of resolution is a fifth, it is clear that this syncope, because of the inconveniences of voice leading connected with that interval, is of inferior value in that it poses a greater technical danger; therefore it is advisable at least to limit the use of this syncope.

Concerning the augmented fourth, see above, §5.

Fux uses  $\sim 4-5$  quite frequently, from which it may be inferred that he has no scruple concerning this kind of syncope.

Albrechtsberger, on the other hand, articulates the following thoughts on p. 59 without further elaboration: "These tied fourths in the lower counterpoint are not authentic fourth-ligatures, but only an accompaniment to the second-ligature, which must go along with [the fourth-ligature] in settings for three or more voices." Through this remark alone he indicates that he certainly does not have a very high opinion of this syncopation.

Apropos of an augmented fourth he uses in an exercise (see Exercise 6, bar 10, p. 000) he remarks as follows on p. 63: "The second NB at the interval  $f - b$  excuses the otherwise faulty *mi contra fa*, because the next measure does not lead to C major but to A minor. Besides, the strictness and constraint of this species excuse much." (Compare also the illustration on p. 105, with the text on p. 106, quoted in Part 3, Chapter 1, §10.)

Bellermann (p. 172f.) also opines that  $\sim 4 - 3$  [in the upper counterpoint] is more frequently used than  $\sim 4 - 5$  in the lower counterpoint; and if the fourth should be augmented, it is said to be prohibited in two-voice counterpoint in the form of a syncopation in the lower voice. See §10 for a quotation [from Bellermann] concerning the augmented fourth in the upper counterpoint.

#### §10. Final codification

In the light of the foregoing, we can state definitively that in the upper counterpoint  $\sim 7 - 6$  and  $\sim 4 - 3$  would be preferable, but in the lower counterpoint only  $\sim 2 - 3$ .

The completely unquestionable character of these latter syncopes, incidentally, can be explained most simply just through the fact that their intervals of resolution are precisely 3 and 6, which are so desirable for counterpoint and which raise no further problems of voice leading.

Regarding the syncopation  $\sim 2 - 3$  we may add that it is the inversion of  $\sim 7 - 6$ , which (because it stems from the passing motion  $8 - 7 - 6$ ) is to be regarded as original. Thus  $\sim 2 - 3$  shares the particular high value of  $\sim 7 - 6$ . And this, finally, is also the reason  $\sim 2 - 3$  in the lower counterpoint appears so much more plausible to our sense than  $\sim 2 - 1$  in the upper.

I have already said that it contradicts the essence as well as the history of the rule under consideration if its justifications are sought only in the realm of free composition. (This unfortunately is what is done by, for example, Riemann, whose theories, so fatally divergent from art, will be refuted at every suitable opportunity.)

Free composition, incidentally, shows mostly *prolongations* of the basic form; how can they even be understood in their true significance, not to mention be systematized, before the basic form has been grasped in and for itself—which can happen only in strict counterpoint? With the following discussion I offer an attempt, within the bounds of a modest outline, to familiarize the apprentice of art with the panoply of syncopation-forms, whose common point of emanation is just that basic form I have set forth in the preceding series of paragraphs. It is obvious, however, that with respect to most

categories, a more detailed explanation and treatment can be offered only in the later sections.

1. First let us cite the *upward resolution* of dissonant syncopes, which incidentally has already been mentioned frequently in §5 (cf. Examples 395–397 and p. 268). Specifically it is the scale degree in free composition which permits—indeed compels—us to assume ascending passing motions as well as descending ones. In this sense, free composition (in contrast to strict counterpoint) includes the syncopes 7, 4, 2, and 9 in the upper counterpoint, and 2, 4, and 7 in the lower; these syncopes resolve upward. But the relation of all of these to the basic form of the dissonant syncopation of strict counterpoint is not at all that of "exceptions," as is unfortunately taught in textbooks and schools both in print and orally: they represent on the contrary new solutions to new *problems*—problems completely foreign to strict counterpoint. On the other hand, it would be equally incorrect to place them alongside the descending resolution as though they were of equal rank from the outset, as, for example, Riemann does. [Voice-leading] situations differ among themselves in rank, and nobody can deny that the situations constructed intentionally for teaching purposes in a syncopation-exercise of strict counterpoint are more primitive than those of free composition. Thus the downward resolution of strict counterpoint must be accorded psychological priority in comparison to the upward resolution of free composition! May teachers finally stop speaking of "rule" and "exception," then, or at least get accustomed to recognizing these phenomena as two branches—one of them younger than the other—that sprout from the same trunk (the passing tone!).

2. Since in free composition the harmony of the triad or seventh-chord is conceived also in its respective inversions, as  $\frac{5}{3}$ ,  $\frac{4}{3}$  or  $\frac{6}{5}$ ,  $\frac{7}{5}$ , and  $\frac{2}{1}$  (see *Harmony*, §§98, 106), it is clear that there the *material content* of a dissonant syncopation is accordingly better understood—specifically, as a suspension resolving precisely to a  $\frac{5}{3}$ ,  $\frac{4}{3}$ ,  $\frac{6}{5}$ ,  $\frac{7}{5}$ , or  $\frac{2}{1}$ -chord.<sup>4</sup> Add to this the possibility of upward resolution and of chromatic motion, and new intervals become available to serve as preparation—intervals that strict counterpoint could not yet allow, such as 4 before 5, 6 before 7, etc.<sup>5</sup> More on this in the later sections.

But to gain a better overview of the varieties of dissonant syncopes, it is advisable to review once again how the basic form consists of three elements: the tone on the upbeat forms the first, which serves as preparation of the suspension; the same tone immediately introduces the second, in that it is continued (tied over) to the downbeat; the third element finally is the resolution to the upbeat. The spirit of variety penetrates into these elements here, so as to transform them individually or collectively in one respect or another.

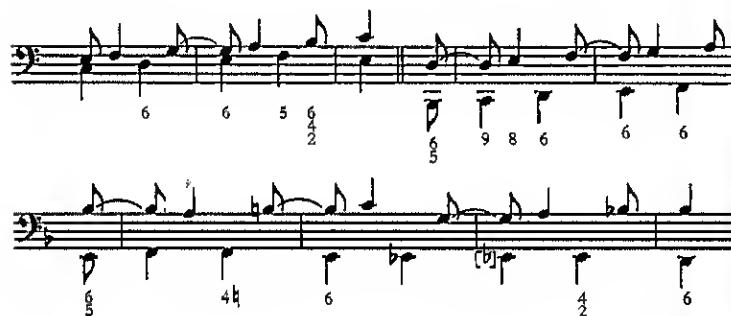
3. I begin with *time* as a basis of variety. Since free composition eschews the rhythmic rigidity of the *cantus firmus*, it proceeds on its own to use a variety of *different note-values* instead of the half-notes of the original form:  (More detail will be provided in the next chapter.) But however these values may be organized, they can be perceived in an artistically correct way, and—which is still more important in free composition—at the same time

performed correctly, if their deviation from the basic norm (that of equal halves) in each case is assimilated into artistic consciousness.

4. Another basis of variety, which, like time, can reshape the syncope, is *harmonic character* within the individual elements. In applying this new basis of variety to those elements, we achieve the following results:

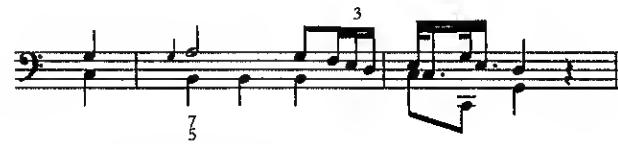
(a) The *preparation* itself may take on a *dissonant* character in free composition, in contrast to strict counterpoint, where it may have only consonant character. Such a dissonance stems usually from a *passing tone*, which derives its necessity and justification from the scale degree,<sup>6</sup> if it is not otherwise based on an *elision* (see below under 5). To this category belong those cases of which C.P.E. Bach (*Versuch*, Part 2, Kap. XXVI) speaks as "displaced notes" (*rückende Noten*), and about which he states the following: "Through displacements (*Rückungen*) the usual *harmony* is either *anticipated* or *delayed*."<sup>7</sup> From his examples, the following may be cited:

Example 418



(b) The tone at the *downbeat* can, in free composition, be consonant in a sense completely different from that which applies to a consonant syncope of strict counterpoint. Since free composition, in contrast to strict counterpoint, includes clearly defined suspensions to seventh-chords (see above under 2), it accordingly presents under certain circumstances even, for example, an octave as suspension to a seventh—or, under the assumption of upward resolution, a sixth suspended to a seventh and the like. Another example from C.P.E. Bach's *Versuch*, cited earlier under a, may be quoted here as an illustration (see Kap. XXV, §8):

Example 419



To the same category belongs also the *suspension of a sixth* before the fifth of a triad, for example in the double suspension  $\frac{4}{2} - \frac{3}{2}$  of free composition. But in such a case, it is not permissible to speak of a sixth that has turned into a dissonance (see above p. 126) or of a "make-believe consonance" (*Scheinkonsonanz*) as Riemann does. Because in actuality it is only our consciousness and prescience of the scale degree itself (or of the harmony to come, whatever its rank) that sets off so much more emphatically the consonant-sixth-suspension in  $\frac{4}{2} - \frac{3}{2}$ —under the guidance of the predicted harmony!—just as clearly as the dissonant fourth-suspension, and sense both suspensions again more clearly than would be possible in strict counterpoint, we must never draw the monstrous theoretical conclusion that culminates in the proposition that just on account of increased clarity (intrinsic to free composition) a sixth should be counted as a dissonance! Wouldn't it then be necessary to treat all other consonances similarly, and to regard them as dissonances the moment they occur with the function of suspensions? For example, in a case like the following:

Example 420

Haydn, Piano Sonata Hob. 46, I



I maintain, then, that in the case of the sixth-suspension we must always be content with just the feeling of suspension, at the same time allowing the sixth to retain fully its consonant character. Otherwise we get onto the precipitous track of Riemann's theory—see his *Handbuch der Harmonielehre*, Part 2, §25. Through misunderstanding and exaggeration of an otherwise correct idea,<sup>8</sup> he arrives at complete misconstrual and falsification of chordal values that are forever regarded by the artist himself as consonant, and simply proclaims them to be dissonant. For example, p. 139: "A chord represents

consonance or dissonance only when understood in its relationships to others—that is, in its logical context. We will discover, therefore, that it can be possible, or rather, necessary, to understand a major or minor triad as a dissonance.” Or the following, p. 140:

If a harmony acquires its full aesthetic value only through its relation to a tonic—that is, if the discrimination of simple- and contra-fourth sonorities is to yield not just empty names but concise formulas for definite functions of harmonies in the musical fabric—, then any chord that is not itself a tonic will actually be heard not as itself, but rather in relation to that chord which is tonic. In other words, only the tonic chord itself is truly an absolute consonance.

But where does it lead, I ask, to call every “relationship”—just because it is a relationship—an adequate ground for conversion to dissonance? Wouldn’t one then necessarily have to consider even the fifth of a fundamental—just by virtue of its undeniable “relationship” to the latter, certified as “adequate” by the overtone series—a dissonance? And finally, isn’t the thing we call a “relationship” in truth merely a mode of our way of conceptualizing (like “time” and “space”), and in no way an objective reality? But why should a “mode of thought” have such power over the natural phenomenon of consonance as to alter its innermost nature? Therefore I caution most emphatically against yielding to the obsession with “relationship,” as Riemann does, and hearing dissonant chords where only consonant ones rule—admittedly maintaining their “relationship” all the while, like everything in the world!

(c) Finally, at the *upbeat*, which is supposed to present the consonant resolution of the dissonant syncopate, a *dissonance* can also appear. It will be shown below under 5 how this is usually combined with an elision.

If we add to the varieties just shown under a, b, and c the liberty of upward resolution, of chromatic progressions, of modulations and so forth, the number of hybrids among all of these varieties soars to infinity. An example may illustrate. Instead of the following:

Example 421

Brahms writes in a syncopated form:

## Example 422

Brahms, Symphony No. 1, Introduction

From this we discover the following: The fundamental of scale degree I itself,  $c^2$ , functions as a suspension to  $c\sharp^2$  (at the last eighth-note of the first bar) as fundamental of scale degree  $\sharp I$ , so that the step is a chromatic one; the  $c\sharp^2$  then serves as a suspension to the following fundamental of scale degree II,  $d^2$ —to be exact, as a consonant suspension  $\tilde{5} - 6$ . The next suspension is found at the first quarter of bar 3, and has the form  $3 \uparrow 4 - 5$ ; next follows  $5 \uparrow 6\flat - 6\sharp$ ,  $6\sharp - 7 - 8$  etc., thus syncopes with ascending resolutions and chromatic progression (see above under 2).

5. Moreover, the syncope is subject to modification brought about by elision:

(a) Thus the *preparation* itself can be elided and the dissonance placed on the strong beat in its absence. Dissonant chords thereby arise, for which in certain circumstances a purely *implicit preparation* (see *Harmony*, Example 281) through the preceding harmony can be assumed; otherwise the apparently free dissonance must be understood as the clearly established internal element of a *latent passing motion* (see above, Example 399). In the latter case, the elided consonance that would initiate the passing motion is to be inferred from and supplied by the harmony belonging to the dissonance itself. In this way we arrive at the so-called *free suspensions*, and it may be that the ultimate origin of seventh-chords (see *Harmony*, §99) is best explained with reference to the elision of a preparation or of the consonant beginning of a passing-tone motion.

When, for example, Brahms, in the last movement of his Fourth Symphony, writes:

## Example 423

Brahms, Symphony No. 4, IV

we find here that a seventh-chord is applied to each bass note (E, F#, G, A); in each case we can assume an implicit preparation, or, in the last analysis, also a passing motion whose consonant initial interval has been elided. (The resolutions, granted, are perfectly regular.)

(b) Further, in free composition a second act of independent character can be *mixed* with the *resolution* in such a way that the latter is prevented from taking place, at least in such a pure form as in strict counterpoint.

And yet even when another voice moves simultaneously, the *consonant* character of the resolution can still be preserved (cf. Example 415), about which, incidentally, more detail will be given in the section on the combined species.

Or, the resolution can be apparently fully divested of its consonant character if it moves directly to a second dissonance. In the latter case one often speaks of a so-called *preparation of dissonance by dissonance*, while in fact the act of consonant resolution of the first dissonance implicitly accompanies the second one—even granting that the rhythm of the basic form is obscured and, simultaneously (for purposes of explanation), a texture of several voices is reduced to an underlying three-voice model. Thus, for example, behind the chain of seventh-chords in Example 230 (bars 2 and 3) in *Harmony* there stands the following basic voice leading, in which I have placed the elided resolutions in parentheses:

Example 424

And still further: scale-degree progression, to which free composition has access, makes the consonant resolution clear even in cases where such preparation [as that in Example 424] is completely lacking. For example, when Beethoven writes in his String Quartet op. 59 no. I (first movement):

Example 425

scale degree II is to be implicitly supplied after VI<sup>7</sup> (cf. *Harmony*, §127); the II—observe the chromaticization of the third! (*Harmony*, §139)—is to be viewed as bearer of both the consonant resolution (g after f) and at the same time as preparation of the next seventh (V<sup>7</sup>). (Compare examples 35–38 above and the explanation, particularly on p. 511.)

6. The possibility of eliding the preparation of dissonant syncopes or resolving them on the strong beat, as well as the possibility of modifying the harmonic character of all elements of the syncopation, leads quite logically to ultimate reduction of the basic form to a mere *concatenation of weak and strong beats*, thus to a purely *rhythmic form*, which then fully resembles the form of the consonant syncopation of strict counterpoint (see above, Example 391). This reduction to a purely rhythmic nucleus may now—insofar as any system at all can be introduced into such a plethora—be considered the final transformation of the basic form.

I would include here the following, for example:

Example 426

Beethoven, Piano Sonata Op. 27 No. 2, Allegretto

Without doubt the purely rhythmic effect of the syncopation-form stands in the foreground here, and, if you like, along with it the effect of anticipation (see the third quarter of the first bar: Gb), which, however, in the last analysis (see p. 188) certainly stems from a passing motion (F—Gb)—the “displacement” of C.P.E. Bach (see p. 280).<sup>9</sup> So far as the scale degrees are concerned, their progression can be identified as I—V—I, unless one prefers first to ignore the tone Ab (the fifth of scale degree I, in the left hand of bar 1) and thus to arrive at the following:

I — II — V — I  
bar: 1, 2, 3, 4

The Ab could then be considered simply an organ point.

Still more instructive is example 427 on page 286. Genuine syncopes, prepared and resolved downwards, are found here in bar 6 (7—6 in relation to the bass Ab, or 4—3 in relation to the scale degree Db itself) and in bar 8 (4—3 in relation to the bass Gb). The remaining syncopes, on the contrary, show a deviation from the basic form, which can be understood only if the scale-degree progression is taken into consideration. Because if at bottom it is the third quarter in each case (here, admittedly, along with the downbeat) that is to be related to the

## Example 427

Beethoven, Piano Sonata Op. 27 No. 2, Allegretto

D<sub>b</sub> major:  $\text{VI}^7_3$  -  $\text{II}^7_3$  -  $\text{v}^b7$  -  $\text{I}^b3$  -  
(B<sub>b</sub> - E<sub>b</sub> - A<sub>b</sub> - D<sub>b</sub> -)

IV - I<sup>7-6</sup> - IV<sup>4-3</sup>  
G<sub>b</sub> - )

harmony (see the dotted lines), then at least in this sense the basic form is apparently still preserved, in which, likewise, it is not until the tone of resolution at the upbeat that the true harmony (belonging to the *cantus firmus*) is completed. It is still more justifiable, however, to compare the syncopes under discussion with those that rest purely on rhythmic bases when one considers that here it is only the roots of the seventh-chords (that is, the tones B<sub>b</sub>, E<sub>b</sub>, A<sub>b</sub>, D<sub>b</sub>, and G<sub>b</sub>) which receive the syncopated form, not the actual dissonances (in the left hand the sevenths: ab, db, gb, cb), which alone, instead of the fundamentals, should according to the rule have been treated in syncopated form. (Regarding the mode of progression of the dissonances, see above, Example 424.)

Incidentally, in those places where the syncope emphasizes its purely rhythmic nucleus it is not always absolutely necessary that the connection from a weak to strong beat be literally expressed graphically by means of a tie. The latter can rather be tacitly supplied according to the meaning of the passage. Haydn writes, for example:

## Example 428

Haydn, Variations in F Minor

## Example 428 continued

in order to express the following melody:

## Example 429

Now observe how, once the notation is completed by the use of longer values,<sup>10</sup> the true rhythmic placement of the tones reveals itself completely differently!

The following example, incidentally:

## Example 430

Beethoven, Piano Sonata Op. 110, Arioso dolente

G minor: 'I' (G) -  $\text{V}^4-3$  -  $\text{I}^b7$  -  
(2-3)

$\text{IV}^4-3$  -  $\text{V}^7-6$  -  $\text{I}^b7$  -  
C - D - G -

$\text{IV}^4-3$  -  $\text{V}^7-6$  -  $\text{I}^b7$  -  
(7-8) (9-8) (4-3)  
C - D - G -

shows that even rests, far from intending to be actual rests, can carry with them and express the effect of ties! Measured in relation to the scale degrees, the first sixteenth-note chord of each 3/16 group in the bass introduces a

syncope, resolving sometimes upward, sometimes downward; moreover, in each case the preceding tone of the melody is to be considered as though still sounding, or—which comes to the same thing—tied in syncopation, into the rest. This effect is completely clear especially in those cases in which the melody even repeats the preceding tone after the rest—for example,  $b^1$  and  $eb^2$ . The performer must therefore take special care to give expression to the concealed syncopes in spite of the notation with rests!

Insofar as rhythm alone is under consideration, it must be noted that in duple or quadruple meter, forms like  $\text{P} \text{P} \text{P} \text{P} \text{P}$  or  $\text{P} \text{P} \text{P} \text{P} \text{P}$  are to be regarded as syncopes; but that on the contrary, in triple meter the connection of the second and third quarters:  $\text{P} \text{P} \text{P} \text{P}$  does not yet count as a syncope, since in comparison to the first quarter, the last two together represent the weak part of the bar.

Thus the following example:

Example 431

Haydn, String Quartet Op. 64 No. 5, I

offers genuine syncopes, but in the next example:

Example 432

Haydn, String Quartet Op. 20 No. 4, Menuetto (alla Zingarese)

Example 432 continued

which likewise has conjunctions of second and third quarters ( $\text{d}$ ), the longer values do not yet represent syncopes. Compare in particular the rhythm, maintained with inimitable virtuosity, in Schubert's "Des Fischers Liebesglück":  $\text{G: } \text{D} \text{ D} \text{ D} \text{ D} \text{ D}$ , which by no means represents syncopes. Concerning "hemiola" (for example, in  $\text{G: } \text{D} \text{ D} \text{ D} \text{ D}$ ) see the lexicon of Koch-Dommer, or Riemann.

To draw the final conclusion from all these considerations, the dissonant syncope of strict counterpoint represents the basic form of all possible forms of dissonance in free composition which occur on the strong beat, as well as many other derivative phenomena. And if the basic form, in keeping with the environment of the cantus firmus, appears at first to be bound only to the strictest specifications, free composition in no way contradicts this if, for its own stronger reasons, it relaxes the specification, and perhaps retains only the core of the phenomenon under discussion.<sup>11</sup>

How the accented passing tone differs from the dissonant syncope can be learned easily from Example 243 or 332: in that the dissonance of the accented passing tone is placed on the strong beat, its similarity to the dissonant syncope is undoubtedly well grounded; but since on the other hand in the accented passing tone both of the consonances that surround it are different tones, and since moreover the tie is lacking, its genus approaches more closely that of the simple passing dissonance.

Cherubini goes too far when he proclaims, without any defense (p. 24, rule 4), that "in two-voice counterpoint of the present species it is necessary to abstain as much as possible from employing the dissonances of the fourth and the ninth. That of the seventh is preferable when the counterpoint lies in the upper voice, and that of the second when it lies in the lower voice." That is admittedly correct, but on purely artistic grounds one could imagine a more thoughtful approach to a problem that certainly remains one of the most difficult and important in our art.

Also a propos here is Bellermann's comment regarding  $\text{4} - \text{3}$  in the upper counterpoint (p. 130):

The tritone and its inversion, the diminished fifth, were used as actual dissonances on the strong beat only in rare cases by the old composers. According to the rules set forth later (two-voice counterpoint, fourth species), their use would be (a) in two voices, as here:

## Example 433



and (b) polyphonically, that is with accompanying voices, as here:

## Example 434



In the strict liturgical masterworks of the sixteenth century, however, this type is seldom encountered.

Compare the dissenting view on p. 262.

## Beginning

## §11. Construction of the beginning

It is permitted in exercises of fourth-species counterpoint, as in those of second-species, to use a half-rest in the first bar.

It is already evident from the use of the syncope, however, that the upbeat must be consonant.

How flexible even this principle is in practice will be shown by two of Fux's exercises when the same problem is treated in the context of three-voice counterpoint. [See Part 3, Chapter 4, §7.]

## Main Body

## §12. Preference for dissonant over consonant syncopes

In general, dissonant syncopes are preferable to consonant ones.

Decisive for this preference is not so much the specific appeal of the dissonant suspension alone, but, rather, its technical value for the voice leading of the counterpoint itself, which can only gain in fluency and smoothness by its frequent and skillful application. (The situation is exactly the same as that regarding the use of the passing dissonance in the second species, cf. Part 2, Chapter 2, §8.)

## The Fourth Species: Syncopation

The student is thus given an opportunity to become acquainted with a new source of effects that are significant for the voice-leading.

There is no doubt that the necessity of tying causes difficulties for the voice leading; but it is all the more important in this context to be mindful of melodic fluency in the counterpoint.

To understand more fully the spirit latent in the historic development of our art, it is prudent to find precisely in the dissonant syncope a means of establishing a purely musical *causality*—a means whose suitability could scarcely be equalled for settings of the vocal epoch. In the instinctive search for technical devices to expand the length of a setting (compare in particular in *Harmony* the note on pp. 163–173) within the context of a voice-leading which—apart from its own laws—had otherwise no compelling necessity, the artistic instinct discovered in the *compulsion* to prepare and resolve a dissonance a most welcome means of feigning a kind of musical causality and necessity at least from harmony to harmony. Considering that a seed of such propulsion was contained even in the simplest *passing motion* (the issue of developing length should be kept always in mind in investigating the nature and history of our art!), it is clear that the compelling force of the dissonant syncope must be viewed as incomparably stronger and more urgent.

The effect of musical causality just described remained an inherent quality of the dissonant syncope even in instrumental music. There, even in the most advanced stage of development, harmonies appear to be linked more intimately and with seemingly greater necessity the more drastically and obtrusively a tone of one harmony hooks into the flesh of the following one. The higher degree of structural necessity as well as length is then further provided by *scale-degrees* (including all that derives from them, such as tonality, chromaticism, modulation, etc.) and *form!* Considering that the artist was able to receive only the major triad from Nature's domain (cf. *Harmony*, §§8ff.), we must marvel at the creative power of the human kind to erect, on a foundation so modest, such a proud edifice of musical art and to imbue it with such strong and compelling necessities! Through these very necessities of a completely individual nature, music acquires "logic" no less than language or the other arts! Thus, it is obvious that there is ample reason to place music, which provides such a proud testament to the autonomy of human creativity, highest among all the arts.

Concerning this issue, we may very well quote Fux's remarks on p. 83: "However, since music derives no small amount of appeal from the ligatures, I advise you not only to set the remaining three cantus firmi in the same manner, but also to practice very thoroughly with other, similar cantus firmi as well; for one can never be too diligent in such studies." Compare, in addition, also the statement on p. 136: "Moreover, take care to apply ligatures sometimes in one voice, sometimes in another; for it is astonishing how much grace the melody receives, even originates, by making each note with a particular motion clearly perceptible to the ear. This applies not only to this kind of composition but to all others as well."

In the context of three-voice counterpoint in the same species, we read the following in *Albrechtsberger* (p. 103): "The remaining bars may have on the downbeat

a consonant or dissonant ligature, the latter of which is preferable if ligatures are used frequently." Moreover, he does not neglect to make the following requirement on p. 62: "Melodic fluency must be observed here as well."

Cherubini brings a different perspective (p. 23, Example 72): "If dissonances are not used, there is a danger of writing parallel octaves and fifths." We will soon see what this rule is all about (cf. §15); in any case, it contributes at least a technical reason for ranking the dissonant syncopation in counterpoint higher than the consonant one.

### §13. The preference for imperfect consonances

As everywhere else in the exercises of counterpoint, the imperfect consonances have a better effect than the perfect ones here as well.

As I have said before, this is the reason the syncopes  $\sim 2 - 1$ ,  $\sim 9 - 8$ , and  $\sim 4 - 5$  are considered less desirable than  $\sim 7 - 6$ ,  $\sim 4 - 3$ , and  $\sim 2 - 3$  (cf. §10).

### §14. Use of the unison also on the downbeat

Because of the good occasion provided by oblique motion (made possible by the ligature, for the first time in counterpoint in relation to the downbeat), the unison is permissible here also on the downbeat—a situation that, as we know, was not allowed to occur in the second or third species.

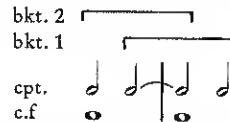
That the unison is, however, permitted on the upbeat is—again for the same reason—self-evident.

Compare Albrechtsberger, p. 58.

Bellermann states further (p. 175): "To place [the unison] several times in succession (either on the upbeat or on the downbeat) is, of course, prohibited according to the rules set down above about the use of perfect consonances." As we will see presently, the unison—precisely because it is a perfect consonance—is subject to the same caution as the other perfect consonances.

### §15. Parallel and nonparallel similar motion in the present species

Among the three relationships that we had to distinguish in treating this problem in the second species (cf. Part 2, Chapter 2, §11), only two remain in the present species; the first and strongest of the former relationships—the direct succession of upbeat and downbeat—has, of course, been absorbed here by the ligature. Here is a diagram of the two possible relationships:



1. Because of the special circumstances of the present situation, the *afterbeat* successions (see bracket 1) here take first consideration.

It makes an essential difference, however, whether the syncopes in these situations are (a) dissonant or (b) consonant, and also whether only the strictest or a less strict standpoint is applied in both cases.

*Ad a:* The dissonant syncopes (the only ones under consideration here), specifically  $8 \uparrow 9 - 8$  and  $1 \uparrow 2 - 1$  in the upper counterpoint and  $5 \uparrow 4 - 5$  in the lower counterpoint, viewed for the time being from the *strictest* standpoint, admit of neither parallel nor nonparallel similar motion in the situation indicated by bracket 1. It is therefore not permitted to write, for example, as follows:

#### Example 435

This prohibition results, first of all, from the nature of the dissonant syncopes, as well as from the requirement that they resolve downward. Because it is completely bound to the latter requirement, the dissonant syncope appears as nothing but a delay of the tone of resolution; thus, the above-cited examples are scarcely anything but delayed parallel or nonparallel similar motions:

#### Example 436

This, however, exposes all too clearly to our perception the poor result of similar motion.

Second, in addition to what was said about these progressions already in the first species (to the extent that they were faulty—cf. Part 2, Chapter 1, §§8–11), the problem is compounded by a circumstance that presents severe difficulty from the psychological standpoint: the obligation and necessity of the downward resolution announce in advance the imminent danger of a prohibited similar motion; therefore, those aspects of obligation and necessity must be considered the actual, treacherous source of the mistake. For if one knows that the dissonant syncopation will have to move in a downward direction, why seek out at all (consciously, that is) the error that lurks in it? The ear always shows us the truth of this matter, beyond any shadow of doubt. (From this, incidentally, we can now finally understand even better why earlier—cf.

§§8 and 9—we had to recommend limitation of the use of  $\sim 9-8$  and  $\sim 4-5$  syncopes.)

The necessity of syncopes, as it is posed precisely by the exercise as such, leads, on other hand, also to a certain leniency regarding the absolute strictness of the prohibition of parallel motion involving dissonant syncopes; otherwise, all voice leading in exercises would soon be rendered impossible. In this exigency we are aided by the more discriminating valuation of perfect consonances from Part 2, Chapter I, §4; and since, for reasons discussed there, the fifth is preferable to the octave for contrapuntal purposes, we permit the syncope  $5 \uparrow 4-5$  in the lower counterpoint under certain circumstances, but we never grant an exception to  $8 \uparrow 9-8$ .

Ad b: The consonant syncope, even though it may be considered (in a more remote sense, to be sure) a delay of the tone following the upbeat, is, on the other hand, free of any requirement of a downward resolution. Therefore, from the outset, even from the strictest standpoint, this syncope may demand, if not complete access to prohibited progressions, at least a certain liberty with regard to parallel motion, to say nothing of nonparallel similar motion—for example:

Example 437



—especially in view of the fact that no better possibility may be available [in a given case]. This liberty is required even more urgently as the successions involved are by nature only afterbeat successions.

The following, however, should be kept in mind: the more attention is paid in such a situation to placing imperfect consonances at least on the downbeat, the better even parallel progressions can be tolerated. Thus,  $6-8 \uparrow 6-8$  is better than  $5-8 \uparrow 5-8$  (cf. Part 2, Chapter 2, §11, under 3, and the remarks under 2 in the present section).

The same principle would apply, strictly speaking, also to the succession of consonant syncopes in the upper counterpoint, that is,  $6-5 \uparrow 6-5$ , which signifies a change of harmony (see above, Part 2, Chapter 2, §13 and Chapter 3, §8)—for example:

Example 438



But the descending second-step contained in the falling succession  $\sim 6-5$  creates for our ear at least the illusion of a required downward resolution to such an extent that, psychologically, our syncope comes close to the realm of actually dissonant syncopes. Our ear automatically reacts with greater sensitivity toward that succession—obviously, indeed, only because of the falling second-step, as though it were a true parallel succession involving dissonant syncopes—; therefore, it may be advisable to exempt the falling succession  $6-5 \uparrow 6-5$  from the liberties granted above to the consonant syncope, and to include it in the prohibition mentioned under a. In other words: the descending consonant syncope  $6-5 \uparrow 6-5$  occupies an *intermediate* position, and, therefore, it is best to extend the prohibition of parallels involving dissonant syncopes (see under a) to this syncope as well, even though it lacks by nature the requirement of a downward resolution. On the other hand, this kind of illusion is not present in the succession  $6-5 \uparrow 6-5$  in the ascending direction; therefore, its use is again characterized by relative freedom.

Nevertheless, what was said above (under a) should not be forgotten: in case of a *more lenient* treatment, it is again the fifth that requires the strictness of the prohibition to a lesser extent than the octave.

As a final result of the considerations set forth under a and b, it should be kept in mind that there can never be an exception in the case of a dissonant [syncope that yields] similar motion to an octave, but that, because of the lesser perfection of the fifth, dispensation may be granted under certain circumstances for a parallel succession of fifths (whether ascending or descending, dissonant or consonant, or in the upper or lower counterpoint) provided only that such a succession not be misused by excessively crass and unnecessarily repetitious application.

2. A still greater degree of liberty, however, is called for from the outset in the relationship of *downbeat* to *downbeat* (see bracket 2) than could be granted in the case of the consonant syncopes discussed earlier. Nevertheless, since the repeated use of perfect consonances on the downbeat would have to result in an overly empty setting, it is clear that the liberty must be applied sparingly in the present situation as well.

Free composition from the outset knows nothing like this. A requirement of uninterrupted syncopes, which is necessary in strict counterpoint for didactic purposes, is from the outset alien to free composition. While this alone reduces the dangers inherent in syncopes with regard to prohibited progressions, an additional factor is the interpretative force of the scale-degree, which can bind together a longer *chain* of syncopes into one single unit—a phenomenon that counterpoint is unable either to originate or to demonstrate. In this context, compare *Harmony*, Example 195, where scale degree VI in B major by itself generates a chain of seven syncopes:  $6-5 \uparrow 6-5 \uparrow 6-5 \uparrow 6-5 \uparrow 6-5 \uparrow 6-5$  (moving in a rhythm of sixteenth-notes over seven eighth-notes). It goes without saying that the repetition of the fifth as a sixth,

as seen there, is equivalent to the ligature of counterpoint, even though the articulation with legato slurs appears to indicate something different.

In this context may be cited the remark by *J.J. Quantz* in his *Versuch einer Anweisung die Flöte traversiere zu spielen*,<sup>12</sup> Chapter XV, §24, on the execution of cadenzas in two parts (cf. also §20ff. in the same work):

In a passage in sixths where you do not wish to touch any dissonances, one of the two parts must anticipate a note, whether ascending or descending, so that the other may adjust accordingly:

Example 439



Here the lower part has the movement, and indicates that in the first bar the upper part should ascend, and later that it should descend again.<sup>13</sup>

How subtly the effect of the anticipation—indeed, in the form of the syncope  $6-5\uparrow 6-5$ , etc.—is here placed in the service of improvising two-part cadenzas, and how delightful the words with which Quantz describes all this! How far the overall level of our musical culture has declined since then—in spite of all the spiritual heroes who have come and gone in the meantime! In general, today's musicians are no longer able to improvise preludes or modulations; they are no longer able even to execute cadenzas and fermatas in their leisure time! And which of today's teachers, incidentally, would be in a position to provide such a clear rationale for a technique like the one just discussed for the execution of cadenzas, and thereby convince the student of its necessity!

In the context of two-voice counterpoint, Fux discusses all these problems as though only in passing. He merely presents the basic principle by taking his theory (discussed earlier in §4) as a point of departure (p. 81):

Therefore, it is impossible to progress from a unison to a second or from an octave to a ninth by way of a ligature, as the following examples show [examples of Table V, Figure 8 follow]. If the retardation were to be eliminated, there would be two unisons in succession in the first example and two octaves in the second [examples of Table V, Figure 9 follow]. However, it is good if the motion from the second to the unison or from the ninth to the octave occurs as follows:

Example 440  
Fux V, 10



These progressions are permissible, because no mistake is contained in them after the retardations are eliminated (Table V, Figure 11).

That is all he considered it appropriate to say about the subject in two-voice counterpoint.

He makes up for his omissions all the more thoroughly, however, in his discussion of the fourth species in three-voice counterpoint. Observe the surprisingly subtle and discriminating train of thought on p. 101:

To treat the subject more thoroughly, however, I must repeat what has been said elsewhere about the [various degrees of] perfection of the consonances: the fifth is a perfect consonance, the octave even more perfect, and the unison the most perfect; the more perfect these intervals are, the less harmony they contain. Furthermore, experience has taught that dissonances by themselves have neither grace nor harmonic beauty, but whatever is perceived as euphonious and charming [about them] is generated solely by the consonances to which the dissonances resolve. Thus, we can see that a dissonance that resolves to a fifth is more tolerable than one resolving to an octave. Therefore, it is not surprising that the following example is discarded by good masters as faulty:

Example 441

Fux XI, 5



the next one, however, is considered suitable to counterpoint:

Example 442

Fux XI, 6



Finally, a resolution is the more easily tolerated and excused the more the perfect consonance to which the dissonance resolves approximates the nature of an imperfect consonance.

Thus, it becomes more clear that from the outset Fux distinguishes between  $8\uparrow 9-8$  and  $5\uparrow 6-5$  in order to disallow parallel  $8\uparrow 9-8$  successions under all circumstances (note well that no mention is made here of the consonant syncope  $8\uparrow 10-8$ ), but to present  $5\uparrow 6-5$  (see above, p. 294) as tolerable. The question remains open whether, in view of [allowed] fifth-successions in the upper counterpoint, the syncope  $5\uparrow 4-5$  in the lower counterpoint is also tolerated. Fux defends his principle of granting syncopes from the outset a greater degree of freedom in fifth-successions than in octave-successions with the following argument (p. 101):

In order to respond to your not inconsiderable reservation, I point out that much that is disallowed in the upper register is tolerated in the lower, because higher tones are perceived with greater accuracy by the ear, while lower tones become

somewhat dark because of their lower pitch, and do not impress the ear so forcefully. For higher elevations clarify, while lower elevations obscure.

Even though, as can be sensed from the context, this remark does not relate to the syncope  $5 \uparrow 4 - 5$ , we may nevertheless conclude that, precisely because it occurs in the lower register, this syncope appears to him less reproachable than  $8 \uparrow 9 - 8$  in the upper counterpoint—leaving aside the intrinsically more desirable quality of the fifth, which, of course, remains the essence of Fux's argument (compare the above quotation from Fux, p. 101).

And, as if all these elaborations were not enough, he adds, using the examples in Table XI, Figures 3 and 4:

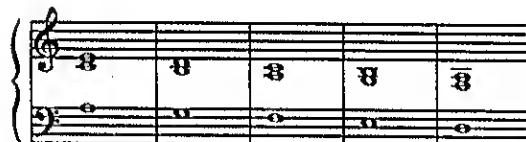
Example 443

Fux XI, 3



Example 444

Fux XI, 4



the following consideration (p. 100), so very characteristic for recognizing the essential quality of tying (cf. §12):

Beyond the fact that one must attend to the authority of great masters, who approve the first example but disapprove the second, you should know that my remark, "ligatures change nothing," applies only to the nature of consonances, which is the same in both examples. For the rest, who can deny that ligatures have a great effect, and have the power to avoid errors and to modify settings?

How beautifully Fux formulates here the double effect of the syncope: on the one hand, it means only a delay of the resolution-tone, so that the suspended tone could simply be disregarded and omitted; on the other hand, however, it manifests a certain transforming power by virtue of which we must attribute to the syncope a purpose and beauty in its own right. (Compare to this the following treasurable definition of the appoggiatura in C.P.E. Bach's *Versuch über die wahre Art, das Clavier zu spielen*, Part I, Section 2, Chapter 2, §1:

Appoggiaturas are among the most essential embellishments. They enhance harmony as well as melody. They heighten the attractiveness of the latter by joining notes smoothly together and, in the case of notes which might prove disagreeable because of their length, by shortening them while filling the ear

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with sound. . . . Appoggiaturas modify chords which would be too simple without them. All syncopations and dissonances can be traced back to them. What would harmony be without these elements?<sup>14</sup>

(Compare also my "Contribution to the Study of Ornamentation" [see Appendix], §1.)

In his own exercises, Fux strictly observes the above theories. He by no means avoids parallel successions with consonant syncopes—for example,  $8 \uparrow 10 - 8$  (cf. Table V, Figure 18, or Table V, Figure 20), or the succession  $5 \uparrow 4 - 5$  (cf. Table V, Figure 19, or Table VI, Figure 1; etc.), which, on the contrary, is frequently used by him with little scruple; that he then uses a nonparallel succession—for example  $6 \uparrow 4 - 5$ —with still less scruple can easily be understood. The relationship of downbeat to downbeat is not discussed at all by Fux; without hesitation he writes, for example, as follows (Table XII, Figure 5, Bars 5 - 7):

Example 445

Fux XII, 5, bs. 5-7



Albrechtsberger's theories are different in many respects; to provide a better overview, I have reordered them:

1. In the relationship of upbeat to upbeat, according to him the following rules apply:

(a)  $8 \uparrow 9 - 8$ : "Here the tied ninth is prepared by the octave. Even a single occurrence of this is prohibited, because it sounds almost like two parallel octaves" (Example no. 4, p. 61).

(b) Octave-successions with consonant syncopes, however, he describes on pp. 59-60 as "good, especially in three and four-voice settings, even though they seem to sound 'octave-and-fifthish' (oktaven- und quintenmässig)" (Examples follow, showing  $8 \uparrow 10 - 8$  in the upper counterpoint and  $8 \uparrow 3 - 8$ ,  $8 \uparrow 6 - 8$  in the lower; in this connection, see also Albrechtsberger, p. 103.) From the qualification added to the above explanation, however, we may surmise that two-voice counterpoint requires some caution.

(c) Regarding  $5 \uparrow 4 - 5$  in the lower counterpoint, he teaches on p. 60f: "The following three ligatures [one of these is  $5 \uparrow 4 - 5$ , the others are described below under dβ and 2a], if used more than once in direct succession, are prohibited in settings of two or more voices, in both strict and free styles, because they sound too 'fifthish'?" In other words, while he prohibits  $8 \uparrow 9 - 8$  without exception, he allows  $5 \uparrow 4 - 5$ , but only under the condition that it be used only once. He gives no reason for this or that opinion, but finally contradicts himself on p. 61 by nevertheless approving successions like the following:

Example 446

Albrechtsberger, p. 61



(d) Parallel successions of fifths in consonant syncopes are differentiated by Albrechtsberger as follows:

(a) He considers them good when they ascend (see above under b), no matter whether the ascent occurs by step or in larger intervals (compare the examples on p. 58:  $5\uparrow 6-5\uparrow 6-5\uparrow 6$ , or on p. 60:  $5\uparrow 3-5\uparrow 3-5$  in the upper and lower counterpoint).

(b) He prohibits them in the descending direction only if they descend by step in the upper counterpoints:  $5\uparrow 6-5\uparrow 6-5$  (see above under c). The other descending fifths are allowed without hesitation, for example:

Example 447



In a certain sense Albrechtsberger's theory is thus more specialized than Fux's; concerning point c and d $\beta$ , it even contradicts the latter. Nevertheless, it lacks aspects that would provide depth and orientation, without which contrapuntal doctrine must remain only a collection of casual rules, restrictions and prescriptions of obscure origin.

2. The following rules apply for Albrechtsberger to the relationship of downbeat to downbeat:

(a) Descending successions of fifths in the lower counterpoint, for example:

Example 448



are prohibited by the same restriction as [that which applies to]  $5\uparrow 4-5$  (see above under 1c).

(b) All other possible types are allowed—for example,  $6\uparrow 5-6\uparrow 5-6$  in the ascending direction (p. 58),  $5-3\uparrow 5-3$  in the descending direction (p. 60); see also p. 100, etc.

Unfortunately Albrechtsberger provides no justification for the rules even here.

Again in this matter, Cherubini assumes the strictest possible standpoint, one that is rigid almost to the extent of obtuse lack of principles. He prohibits  $5\uparrow 4-5\uparrow 4-5$  (p. 23, Example 70), without any differentiation and under all circumstances, and also prohibits  $8\uparrow 5-8\uparrow 3-8$ , etc. (Example 72),  $5\uparrow 6-5\uparrow 6-5\uparrow 3-5$ , etc. (same example). In practice, however, we see him contradicting himself by using  $5\uparrow 6-5\uparrow 6-5$  (see p. 24, Exercise 2). Strangely enough, Cherubini does not discuss parallel successions from downbeat to downbeat at all. From this strict standpoint, one understands more easily his statement (quoted in §12) recommending more frequent use of dissonant syncopes.

Finally, it should be mentioned that he also cites the example of Fux (quoted in this volume as Examples 443 and 444), and appends to it a little polemic that unfortunately is characterized only by naive sincerity. It may be found on pp. 36 and 37.

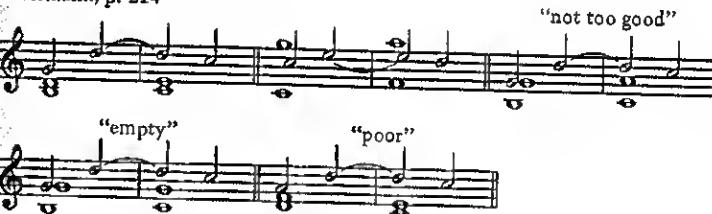
*Bellermann* seems at first to follow the doctrine of Albrechtsberger (p. 175): "Since the tied note on the downbeat is considered an extension of the preceding note on the upbeat, it is not good to use the same perfect consonant interval several times in succession on the unaccented part of the bar." Therefore, he considers "bad" also the example  $8\uparrow 6-8\uparrow 6-8$ , while the grade "marginally acceptable" is given  $5\uparrow 6-5\uparrow 6-5\uparrow 6-5$  (in the descending direction). Then he prepares to draw from this a bold consequence: "The same reason explains also why fifths, as they appear in the following settings with both voices ascending, are not unpleasant to the ear, even though they occur on the accented part of the bar." Thus, he approves  $6\uparrow 5-6\uparrow 5-6$  (ascending) with the predicate "good," but immediately revokes as much as he has conceded: "The student must not repeat such turns too often, but must always aim for an appealing variety of intervals." Does this mean that he might admit, from the outset, the application of less stringent principles from downbeat to downbeat? And even though he explicitly speaks only of fifth-successions, are octave-successions implicitly included here?

How the prohibited octave succession that always threatens in the case of a  $\sim 9-8$  syncope can be avoided, he discusses only in the context of three-voice counterpoint, on p. 214:

It should be noted that the ninth is to be prepared by the tenth, or some other such interval, from which the bass must ascend if it is to form a ninth with the voice in question on the next accented beat, so that if the ninth were to be replaced by its resolution, the voices would move in contrary motion. Preparation by the octave is completely faulty, since very ugly hidden octaves would result.

Example 449

*Bellermann*, p. 214



*Riemann* approaches this question in his *Grosse Kompositionslehre*<sup>15</sup> (Vol. II, Chapter 9, §3); however, he immediately obscures its origin: instead of determining the effect of prohibited progressions in the context of the phenomenon of syncope in counterpoint, he immediately speaks of the mannerism of "chain suspensions," which, of course, find application only in free composition. A critique of this improper procedure will follow later.

### §16. The possibility of an interruption of the ligatures

The law of syncopes is, of course, uniformly valid for the duration of the exercise; nevertheless, it is permitted, as an exception, to interrupt the syncopes and replace them with two ligature-free beats, for which, in some cases, a half-rest and a half-note can also substitute. This is appropriate when a

repetition (*monotonie*) is to be avoided, or to give a new stimulus to a line, once its continuation has become impossible for one reason or another.

Fux explicitly cites monotony as a reason [for an interruption of ligatures] on pp. 81-82:

*Joseph*: I could indeed have used a ligature there, but I deliberately avoided it in order to preclude an unpleasant repetition, since I had used the same ligatures immediately before in the third and fourth bars.

*Aloys*: Your remark is prudent, for one must pay careful attention to matters of melodic fluency and continuity.

That he views the interruption of ligatures, nevertheless, only as a concession necessary in a difficult situation, can be seen from the following basic idea stated in the context of three-voice counterpoint [p. 104]: "The ligatures here constitute the main purpose, a thorough understanding of which can be gained through such exercises." (Compare the quotation in §12.)

*Albrechtsberger* (p. 62): "Finally, it is important to know that, in case the invariable use of ligatures is not of good effect, it is permitted if necessary to use once or (at most) twice a freely introduced consonance on the downbeat in the counterpoint." (Compare also p. 103.) We may also recall, however (see above, §5), how, as a result of the use of the dissonant diminished fifth as a syncope in the upper counterpoint, he (precisely Albrechtsberger himself) arrives at yet another and individual interruption of ligatures.

*Cherubini* proceeds this time with greater precision (p. 24, rule 5):

The law of syncopating is to be observed in every bar. However, if this obligation makes it difficult to keep the melody in a middle register—in other words, if the syncope would carry it too high or too low—or if the syncope causes similar phrases to have too much resemblance [cf. Fux, above], or, finally, if phrases become too confusing through syncopes, then it is advisable not to syncopate for one or (at most) two bars. This remedy, however, should be used only if there is no other possibility.

For *Bellermann's* comments on this matter, see p. 175f. of his treatise.

### §17. The prohibition of tone-repetition

It should be emphasized that here, as well as in the second and third species, the repetition of tones is entirely disallowed.

### Cadence

### §18. Cadential formulas

Without exception,  $\sim 7-6 | 8$  is to be used in the upper counterpoint, and  $\sim 2-3 | 1$  in the lower. This is evident already from the required presence of both leading tones:

#### Example 450



A different type of cadence, which appears in an exercise by *Beethoven* (*Nottebohm*, p. 50):

#### Example 451



is expressly criticized by *Albrechtsberger* with the remark "N.B. not too often"; he adds as a correction ("better") the syncope  $\sim 2-3 | 1$ . Compare the same situation in *Nottebohm*, p. 52, and in *Albrechtsberger's* own treatise, pp. 105-106.

Nevertheless, one must consider that, if the cantus firmus were to have, for example, the following cadence:

#### Example 452



the closing formula  $\sim 2-3 | 1$  would not be possible at all from the outset. Since it is impossible to give up the other leading tone, B, would it not be better, instead of writing as follows:

#### Example 453



to proceed in this way:

#### Example 454



§19. *The misguided treatment of syncopes in the conventional theory of harmony*

The theory of syncopes represented here treats, to state it once again and most emphatically, precisely the same subject matter that is taught in conventional textbooks on harmony in chapters about the preparation and resolution of the seventh and the other dissonances. May the type of treatment to which this problem has been subjected here demonstrate that the problem of the syncope can have its real home [only] in counterpoint, not in the theory of harmony.

Exercises

Example 455

Fux V, 16 and 17

Soprano

1. Alto (c. f.)

2. Tenor

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Example 455 continued

Fux V, 20 and VI, 1

Alto

3. Tenor (c. f.) 7 5 5 10 12 11 10

4. Bass 2 4 5 3 5 3 5

Albrechtsberger p. 62

Soprano

5. Soprano (c. f.) 7 3 1 3 3 8 5

6. Alto 6 6 6 6 3 6

**Example 455 continued**

Three staves of musical notation for three voices (Soprano, Alto, Bass) in common time. The Soprano and Alto staves are in treble clef, and the Bass staff is in bass clef. Measure 5: Soprano (5), Alto (5), Bass (4). Measure 6: Soprano (6), Alto (6), Bass (6). Measure 7: Soprano (5), Alto (NB.), Bass (5). Measure 8: Soprano (6), Alto (6), Bass (5). The score concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

Albrechtsberger p. 63

7. *Soprano* "or: 2 3 2 3"

8. *Alto (c. f.)* 5 4 4 7 6 7 6 6

9. *Bass* 6 2 2 6 8 6 8 6 5

A musical score for 'The Star-Spangled Banner' in G major. The top staff shows a melody line with a bassoon part below it. The bassoon part consists of a series of eighth notes on the bass clef staff. The melody line is on the treble clef staff, with notes corresponding to the bassoon's notes. The bassoon part starts with a bassoon note on the first note of the melody, followed by a bassoon note on the second note of the melody, and so on. The bassoon part ends with a bassoon note on the eighth note of the melody.

**Example 455** *continued*

Albrechtsberger p. 74

### Soprano

A musical score for piano and Tenor (c. f.). The piano part is in the upper staff, and the Tenor part is in the lower staff. The Tenor part consists of a series of eighth-note chords: G, B, D, F, G, B, D, F. The score is in common time, with a key signature of one sharp. The piano part includes a dynamic instruction 'piano' and a measure number '9'. The Tenor part is labeled 'Tenor (c. f.)' and has a measure number '7' at the end of the line.

Bellermann p. 176 (c.f. by Fux)

### Soprano

10. *Alto (c. f.)* 6 5 6 5 5

11. *Tenor* 3 5 2 6

## Example 455 continued

H. Schenker

Soprano

## Comments on the Preceding Exercises

No. 1. Concerning the interruption of tying in bar 5, see §16. Bellermann, who uses the same exercise (p. 176), disregards monotony and makes the following change:

## Example 456

which certainly does not succeed in improving the effect.

As to the succession of two major thirds in bars 5–6:  $\text{B}^{\text{A}} - \text{C}^{\text{F}}$  see above, Part 2, Chapter 1, §18.

No. 2. This exercise (also taken over by Bellermann) basically shows, if the ligatures are removed, only successions of thirds. If this is in a certain sense to be considered a fault of the counterpoint—one that can be excused only in part by the basic requirement of ligatures and the difficulties resulting from it—, one should nevertheless at least not overlook the octave, sixth, and fifth on the downbeats of bars 2, 5, and 7, which do improve the effect here.

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No. 3. In bar 5 the counterpoint moves beyond the limit of a tenth; this results in the ambiguity of the intervals of bars 6 and 7: are they really 11—10 and 9—8 or only 4—3 and 2—1 (see p. 274)? As to the parallel octaves in the upbeats of bars 9 and 10, see above, p. 294 (note that the downbeats in these bars show the preferable intervals 5 and 10); concerning the fifth-successions in the downbeats of bars 3 and 4, see p. 295. In both cases we encounter non-dissonant successions of syncopes, and therefore Bellermann's cautionary attitude is exaggerated. He changes bars 9–10 (p. 177) to the following:

## Example 457

obviously in order to avoid parallel octaves—unless perhaps he merely wanted to avoid a second touching of the tone  $\text{a}^1$ .

No. 4. In bars 3–5 there are third-leaps with fifth-successions; they have been discussed above on p. 294. About the unusual occurrence of the  $\text{^2} - \text{1}$  syncope in bar 7, see above, pp. 269 and 274–277. In order to avoid this syncope, Bellermann changes the passage as follows (p. 177):

## Example 458

No. 5. Concerning the fifth-succession on the downbeats in the ascending direction (that is, 5—6 $\uparrow$ 5—6 $\uparrow$ 5—6 in bars 7–10), see p. 295, and [later on, p. 300] in the commentary on the literature, under 2b in the section dealing with Albrechtsberger. As to the syncope of the diminished fifth and its resolution in bars 10–11, see the commentary on Albrechtsberger in §5.

No. 6. Concerning the NB at tone 10 regarding the augmented fourth in the lower counterpoint, see the Albrechtsberger quotations in §§5 and 9.

No. 7. The double figuring in bars 5–7 is by Albrechtsberger himself. Whoever follows him in disregarding the actual distance between voices (cf. above, §8), can, of course, substitute a higher octave in this case and, accordingly, think of the syncope  $\text{^7} - \text{6}$  instead of  $\text{^2} - \text{3}$ .

No. 8. In accordance with his conception of the minor mode, Albrechtsberger uses the raised sixth and seventh tones of the minor scale in the main body of the exercise (bars 2 and 4) without hesitation. Concerning the fifth-succession in ascending direction on the downbeats of bars 7–10, see p. 300 under  $\text{d}\alpha$ . The exercise, because apparently instrumentally conceived, is unfortunately misleading; one need only transpose the added voice an octave higher to be convinced that it is not at all necessary to exceed the limit of a tenth in this case. This is nothing but an all-too-convenient mode of writing.